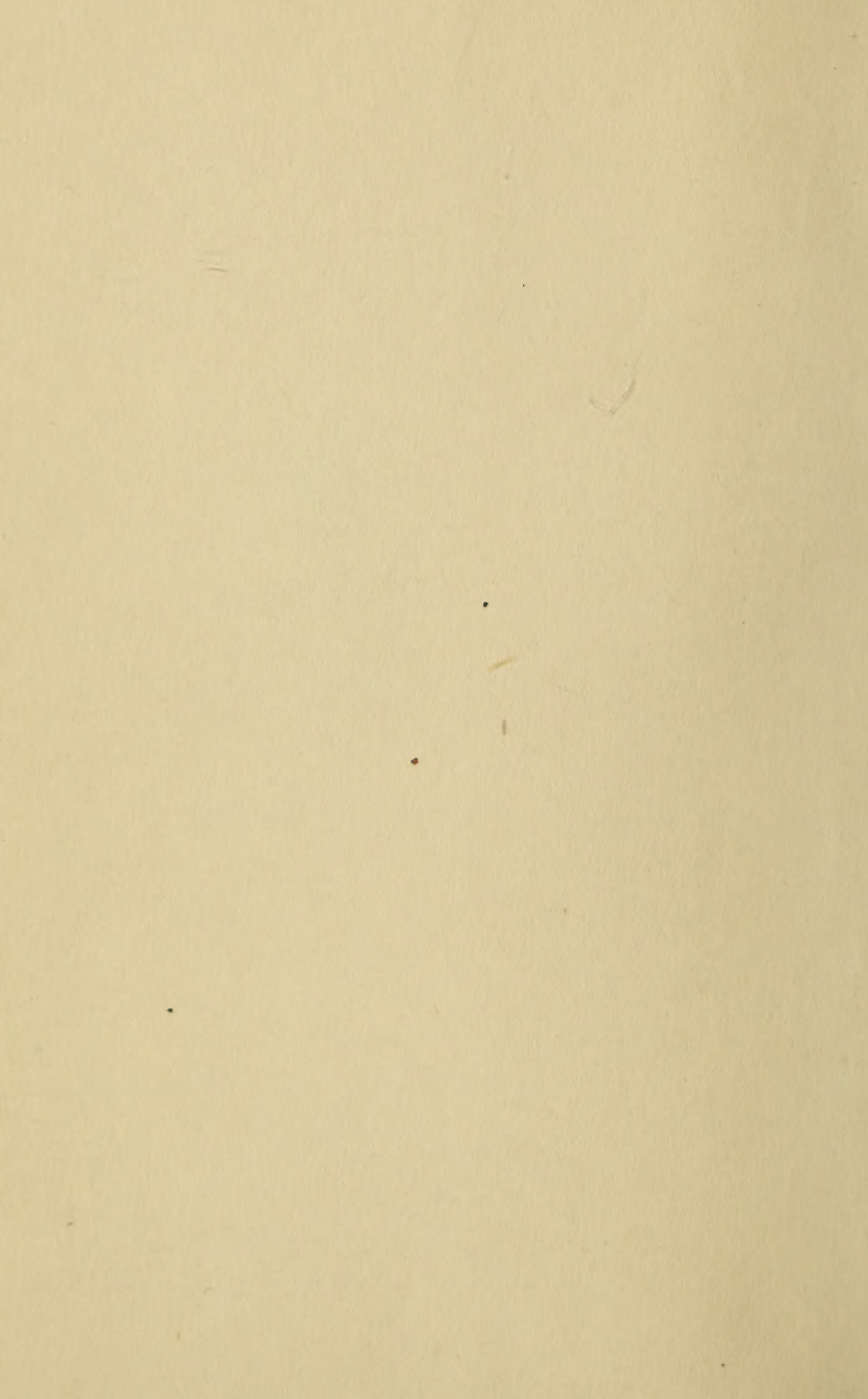




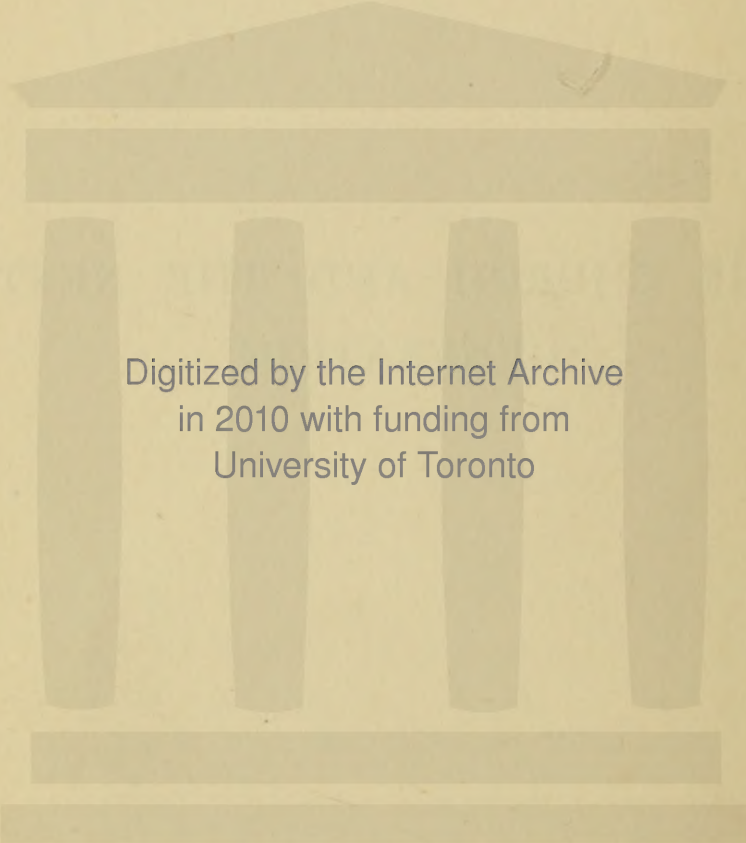
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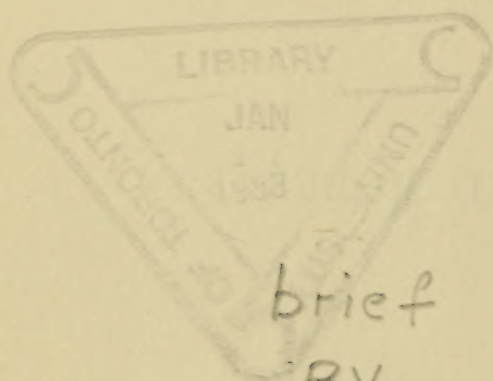
BY

RICHARD ROBERTS
...

LONDON

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1909



brief

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PREFACE

FOR some years past the writer of this little book has pleaded, both within his own Church and elsewhere, by pen and speech, for a revision of the Church's attitude towards the young, and especially for a more reasonable and enlightened policy with regard to the Sunday school. In the following pages he has endeavoured to set down, in greater detail and in order, the substance of the plea, together with the main lines along which, as he believes, the reform of the Sunday school and related institutions must be sought. The responsibility for the book lies partly upon the friends who counselled the writing of it.

That there is little new or original in the book is frankly admitted, but it has the merit of being to a considerable extent the record of personal experience. Neither are any pretensions made to completeness. That would require a far more detailed treatment of many points, and for that the writer does not profess to have the necessary expert knowledge. He has studied with care a great mass of Sunday school literature published on both sides of the Atlantic, and the sole claim he ventures to make is that, despite its admitted incompleteness, the book contains a fuller survey of the case for, and of the lines of, Sunday school reform in this country, having regard to all the conditions of English Sunday school life, than has yet appeared.

That the Church is waking up to a new sense of its responsibility with reference to the

Preface

child-life with which it is in touch needs no demonstration ; we are on the threshold of a new era in the history of the Sunday school. The causes of this movement need not be discussed here, as something is said of them in the body of the book ; but it may be permitted at this point to say a word of real gratification that the National Sunday School Union is not merely in sympathy with, but is assuming a practical and thorough-going leadership in, Sunday school reform. It is usually the case that old institutions of this kind have to be pushed by main force into new movements ; but we are to be congratulated that the Sunday School Union has in this country retained its youth so vigorously as to be the originator and the champion of the movement for bringing the Sunday school into conformity with modern educational ideals and for adapting it more closely to the needs of the time.

Apart from the acknowledgments made in the body of the book, a special word of thanks is due to Professor G. A. Coe for permission to reproduce the chart on p. 13, and for much other help ; and to the Rev. Carey Bonner for the statistical information quoted in the footnote, p. 9. How much the book owes to Mr. G. Hamilton Archibald will be evident to those who may read it. My thanks are also due to Mr. Robert Whyte for some valuable suggestions.

ST. PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
WESTBOURNE GROVE, W.,
June 26th, 1909.

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I

THE PRESENT SITUATION

THE problem of the Sunday school is summed up in the word "*leakage.*" By this is understood the steady stream of young people who pass out of our Sunday schools without being won either into Christian discipleship or Church membership.

It is estimated by competent authorities that this leakage amounts to 80 *per cent.* of the elder scholars. This calculation must from the nature of the case be largely conjectural; but it cannot possibly be far from the actual facts.*

By the side of this estimate, in order that its full significance may be realised, should be set the fact that in all probability four out of five of all the available children of England and Wales are connected with Sunday schools.†

* See footnote on p. 16.

† Mr. Carey Bonner tells me that this estimate is arrived at thus :—From the census returns of young people are deducted Roman Catholics, Jews, those in workhouses and asylums, a percentage of the wealthy class who never attend school; and

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The great and persistent lament of the Christian leaders of our time is the indifference of the masses. Church attendance censuses and other investigations have given us very alarming statistical evidence of the extent of this indifference. It is probably no exaggeration to say that four-fifths of the people of this country are not in any kind of vital association with the Churches. This, it will be noticed, is the proportion of the available junior population which is to be found *in* the Sunday school.

It is not, perhaps, sufficiently recognised, in discussions of the prevailing indifference, that it is by no means exclusively indifference *to religion*. It is probably an under-estimate that there are between seven and eight millions of wage-earners in this country who might be members of Trade Unions, yet the Unions which report to the Board of Trade have only a membership of something over a million and a half; and it is not probable that the actual total is much more than two millions. It is almost impossible not to infer that four-fifths of the people of this country are indifferent alike to

an allowance is also made for young people in boarding schools. The remaining number available is 6,408,911.

The total returns for all Sunday schools in England and Wales amount to 6,574,267. From this is deducted, on careful calculation, 20 per cent. for senior scholars over 15. This leaves a net result in junior scholars of 5,257,814.

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the claims of God upon them and to the possibilities of social and material betterment.

It is beyond the scope of our present purpose to enquire into the causes of this indifference. The subject is one upon which there is a great deal of loose and unintelligent talk; and until there is a serious endeavour to investigate all the facts frankly and in detail, we shall not clearly understand what the causes and the remedies of the trouble are. The present writer cannot escape the conclusion—as the result of a good deal of observation and enquiry—that much of the indifference is due to the stringency of economic and social conditions. “No man,” it has been said, “was ever saved with his feet cold.” But it is not only cold feet, but empty stomachs and starving bairns at home that incapacitate men for giving a fair hearing to the claims of Jesus Christ. This opens up the question of the Church’s obligation in regard to social reform; and no one can deny the acuteness and urgency of that obligation who knows anything of the hindrances to the progress of the kingdom of God which are entailed by the pressure of modern social conditions. There is, of course, also much indifference due to culpably low views of life; but this is not peculiar to the

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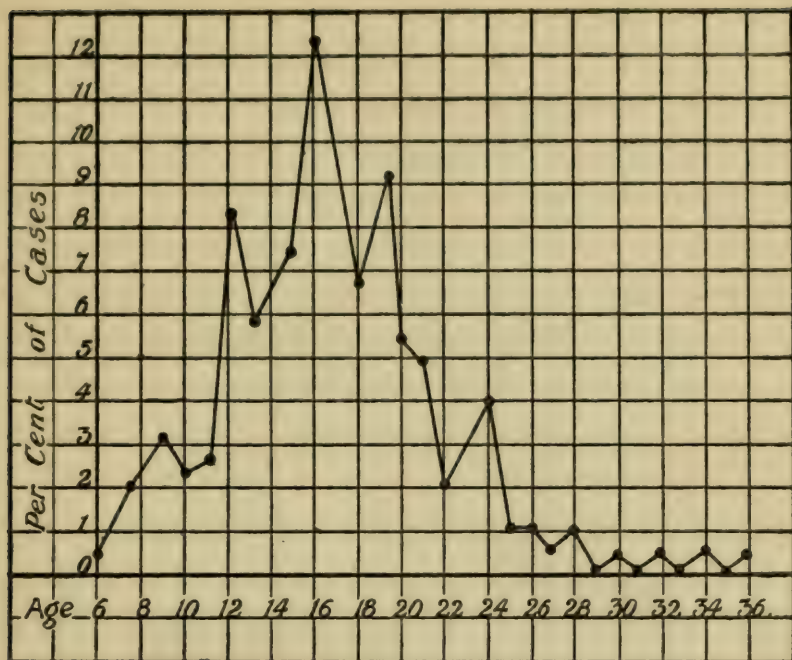
poorer classes. It prevails as much, probably a good deal more, among the rich.

In this situation there is one element which is very discouraging to students of the problem of indifference. It arises out of the recent investigations of certain American scholars who have devoted themselves to the study of the psychology of religious experience. It amounts to this—that a man seems to lose his susceptibility to the influences which produce conversion or religious awakening almost altogether after he has passed twenty years of age. A series of remarkable statistical investigations are recorded by G. A. Coe in "The Spiritual Life" (pp. 40—45), which give a very surprising confirmation of this statement.

E. G. Lancaster examined 598 miscellaneous cases of religious awakening and found that 518 "showed new religious inclinations between the ages of twelve and twenty-five, and mostly between the ages of twelve and twenty." Coe gives the following chart as illustrating the distribution of conversions with reference to age among 272 members of the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

* "The Spiritual Life," p. 44. The chart is reproduced by the kind permission of Professor Coe and his publishers, Messrs. Eaton and Mains.

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This curve presents the same general features as two others which the author gives. The rise and fall of the curve indicates the proportion of conversions at the various ages; and there can be no mistake as to the marked difference between the two periods of life which are divided off from one another at twenty years of age.

The broad inference which I draw from these and similar observations, is that the chances of effectual religious appeal to the indifferent adult population of the country are very small indeed.

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I do not say that a man may not be converted at any point during his lifetime. It would be untrue to experience to say so; but it would be equally untrue to experience to say that such cases are not the exceptions. With all our preaching we do not appreciably affect the mass of the people. I have had during the last four years exceptional opportunity of studying the conditions and results of evangelistic work all over England, and the invariable testimony is that the outsider is not reached. It is, moreover, a matter of common knowledge that all the great united missions of recent years have left no appreciable mark upon the life of the people at large.

What does stand out very clearly in the case of those evangelistic efforts which the writer has had special occasion to follow during recent years is, that when conversions do take place they are almost invariably those of young people who are already in some kind of association with the Churches and have had some measure of religious training. In Coe's curve given above it will be seen that it reaches its highest point at the sixteenth year. The average age of conversion in this group is 16.4 years; and in the case of an aggregate number of 1,784 conversions and religious awakenings

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examined the average works out at precisely the same figure.

This is, however, not the only fact of importance that emerges from these enquiries. It will be seen that Coe's curve has three quite well-marked peaks. Comparing this curve with the two others which are given by the same author, it is possible to mark out three points of maximum susceptibility to religious influences, the first appearing between twelve and thirteen years, the second about the sixteenth year, and the third between eighteen and twenty. These are the points at which conversion seems usually to take place.

It is at first sight somewhat disturbing to our generally accepted ideas to discover that this sensitiveness to spiritual influence occurs at the periods when the physical changes of adolescence are in most active progress; because it seems to indicate that religious awakening may be a mere bye-product of physical processes. There is, however, no essential relation between the two things. The obvious circumstance that at present the majority of people pass through the physical changes of adolescence without passing through a corresponding religious crisis, proves that there is no inevitable connection between the

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physical processes and the religious awakening. The fact seems to be that during the adolescent period the whole nature is thrown into a ferment. It is a period of transition, and therefore of peculiar malleability.

Once more to quote Coe: "The mental condition during adolescence is particularly favourable to deep religious impressions. This is the time that the child becomes competent to make a deeply personal life choice; such a choice is now easier than either before or after; this is accordingly the time at which a wise Church will expect to reap its chief harvest of members." *

It was said a few pages back that the results of these investigations are in some measure discouraging to those who hope that it may be possible to deal effectively with the massive indifference of our time. Failing some deep change in our method of approaching it, or failing some great sweeping revival, we shall have to go on content to secure a few isolated cases of conversion here and there. But if these facts do not give us very much

* Principal Ritchie, of Nottingham, has investigated the statistics of the Wesleyan Methodists and concludes that while only 20 per cent. of Sunday scholars have been retained for the Church, yet that represents 78 per cent. of the total Church membership!

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hope in that direction, surely they are full of encouragement when we look another way. Assuming the substantial accuracy of Mr. Carey Bonner's estimate given above (and there seems to be no reasonable doubt about it), we know that we have the great bulk of the young people of the country passing through our hands during a very considerable part—and that for our purposes the most favourable part—of this critical period of adolescence; and therefore, if we may not be able to do much to save the present generation from indifference, it is not impossible that we may, if we use our opportunities rightly, save the next generation from it altogether. But if we are going to save the next generation from indifference, we must begin *now*; and the obvious place to begin is the Sunday school.

II

THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

IN the face of the situation as it has been outlined in the previous chapter, it is evident that there must be a radical change in our practical attitude towards the Sunday school. We need, first of all, to revise our conception of the place and the function of the Sunday school in the economy of our Church life. The Sunday school was here before any of us, and we have settled down to the fact of its existence as a matter of course, without any real enquiry into the *reason* of its existence. I am not unmindful of the splendid advocacy of the cause of the Sunday school for which the Sunday School Union and many individuals have been distinguished for a great number of years. But the fact remains that the Church in our generation has not taken the Sunday school seriously. It has regarded it as a more or less necessary annexe to a complete ecclesiastical organisation, in the conduct of

Function of the Sunday School

which there has rarely been a consistent and intelligent principle, in the management and manning of which much has been left to haphazard, and concerning which there has not been generally any very acute sense of responsibility. Its place in the economy of the Church has been vague and undefined; and it has been the custom to think any willing person good enough to take a share in its work. There has been no pretence of enquiry into the willing person's qualifications for the work he undertakes. The consequence of all this is the present indifference to religion, against which we seem so powerless.

The first necessary step in the renaissance of the Sunday school is a general, clear and intelligent recognition of its evangelistic function. It is supremely the place where the Church is to obey the command, "Go, teach . . . making disciples." The end of the Sunday school is to establish and confirm individuals in a conscious personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Sunday school has largely failed in the past because of the comparative absence of any organised and consistent effort to realise the specifically evangelistic character of its purpose. The teacher has generally gone to teach a lesson,

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to impart a certain amount of Scriptural instruction, and he has left it at that.

This does not imply any blame upon the teacher which is not equally—and more—a blame on the whole Church. It is not that the teacher has inadequately understood his business so much as that the Church has had no clear notion of what it wanted the teacher to do. It has never said to the teacher distinctly and plainly, “It is your business to take a part in making disciples.” The service, self-denying and devoted, of multitudes of Sunday school teachers through many years is beyond praise. Many of them have seen, spontaneously, the meaning of their high office and have sought faithfully to discharge it. Many more have, by the subtle but irresistible power of their own personal characters, won disciples for Jesus Christ, in spite of whatever vague conceptions they may have had of the significance of their teaching office. But if the Sunday school is to do the work which the future of Christ’s kingdom demands, all this indeterminateness and vagueness as to its precise function must be cleared away; and it must be understood that the teacher, no less than the preacher, exists, first of all and most of all, to win souls.

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But with all this there must go a correspondingly clear view of the *method* by which the school is to realise its aim. Its method will obviously be educational; and we may sum up both aim and method in the one phrase — “*Evangelisation through education.*” Its purpose is education *into and in* personal religion. Religious education must be clearly distinguished from Scriptural instruction. The latter is a part (necessary and indispensable, it need hardly be added) of the former. It has been too much assumed that instruction in the Scriptures is in itself sufficient; but however well that instruction may be given, it does not of necessity follow that any definite spiritual consequences will result from it. We have to keep clear in our minds the fact that to fill the mind with Scriptural knowledge is wholly subsidiary to the main business of touching the pupil’s life and establishing in him a definite Christian consciousness and character. It is perhaps less difficult nowadays to grasp this distinction than it has been in the past. The State recognises that the end of all education is the promotion of good character and good citizenship. All the instruction given is intended to lead up to this. If we inform the mind, it is chiefly in order that we may shape

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character. Whatever the *materials* of education may be, there can be no doubt that the aim and ideal of education are moral. It has taken us nearly a century of educational experience to come up to this point ; but it is now commonly acknowledged. And the public will come to understand in time that the business of education is something a good deal more vital and radical than the equipment of the child with a quantum of knowledge in order that he may make his way through the world.

Similarly, the business of the Sunday school lies beyond the mere task of Scriptural instruction. It aims at a definite spiritual end. The *materials* of the education include the Scriptures as their chief constituent ; but they will also include any and every thing that may tend to promote interest in the spiritual. There is no reason why nature study should not have a much larger place in our Sunday school curricula ; and together with it, at the proper stages, the great lessons both of ecclesiastical and secular history, the lives of the great Christian heroes, especially in the department of missionary enterprise. But all this is intended — and therefore should be organised and arranged—to secure

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a definite spiritual result in the individual life.

That the aim of the Sunday school is evangelistic does not mean that the teacher is to regard himself as a complete evangelist. He is a unit in an institution *the total aim* of which is evangelistic. The endeavour to obtain immediate spiritual results must be strictly confined to those periods of Sunday school life to which these results properly and generally belong. If the results come spontaneously before that period, well and good; but few things do more harm than the attempt to force premature spiritual crises. The religious education of the Sunday school must be regarded as one continuous process, beginning with the earliest stage of the child's school life and culminating in the period of adolescence, each separate stage being integrated closely into the whole scheme, both in respect of the particular matter and the particular method of the education appropriate to each stage, so that, step by step, the proper mental atmosphere is created, the proper interests are awakened and the proper influences are set afoot, until at length they converge in that momentous decision which, as the previous chapter has shown, may be

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legitimately expected at any time after the child has attained the age of twelve years. But each teacher must be loyal to his own share of the work. He must understand the limits within which his immediate responsibilities lie, and observe them faithfully. How much of knowledge and wisdom and insight this will require in the teacher will presently appear.

The renaissance of the Sunday school can only be accomplished by a recognition on the part of the Church of the great nobility and the permanent necessity of its work. The Church's teaching function, no less than the preaching office, should have a definite, stated and honoured place in its life. The teacher should be set apart to his office with as much solemnity as the preacher and the elder. It is at the present time a matter of extreme difficulty to secure a sufficiency of teachers of any kind, but if the service of the Sunday school came to be regarded as the real privilege and honour that it is, we ought not to find it difficult to secure plenty of the most intelligent and capable people to volunteer for the work. At the present time many persons of this kind will not even contemplate the possibility of engaging in Sunday school work

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because they feel that the Church is playing with it. If the Church woke up and declared in real earnest that its Sunday schools constitute as august and honourable a department of the Christian service as any other part of it, and set itself to homologate its declaration in several obvious practical ways, the renaissance of the Sunday school would come with startling swiftness. Next to the missionary enterprise of the Church, on every conceivable ground, in point of urgency and possibility, stands the work of the Sunday school, and at no great distance from it. For if it be a Christian thing to save Chinese men and women of the present, it is no less a Christian thing to save British men and women of the future.

It may look on the face of it a preposterous claim that the Sunday school can win the future of this country for Jesus Christ. The opportunity of the teacher is confined to less than an hour a week, and his work is very frequently counteracted by unfavourable home influences. There is no way of enforcing regular attendance, and there are other handicaps. Yet the Sunday school can do this great thing. It may be that the issue of the present educational controversy will leave the

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Sunday school, if not the only, the chief agent of religious education in the country. On that ground its present condition should very seriously exercise the minds and hearts of the leaders of the Churches. Properly organised, there is no reason why the Sunday school should not be capable of the work. Moreover, the Sunday school as it is fills a very much larger place in the average child's life than the bare weekly hour of the school session. What is wanted is a better understanding of how this weekly hour may be used to the greatest profit in the business of winning the young for the kingdom of Christ.

And all this is coming. The renaissance of the Sunday school is no distant dream. It is even now at the doors. All over the country, in all the Churches, there is a sound of a going. Eager questions are being asked. Many anxious experiments are being made. Teachers are becoming conscious of their great calling and of their inadequate equipment for it. The teaching arm of the Church is surely coming into its own.

III

THE MODERN DISCOVERY OF THE CHILD

THE awakening of interest in the Sunday school is in great part the result of the increased attention which is given to the child both by students of psychology and social reformers. "Social reformers," says Professor Henry Jones, "as their experience grows, tend to despair of doing anything real for the man, and to turn their forces of improvement more and more upon the child."* While it would not be true to say that the Church despairs of doing anything real for the man, it is nevertheless the bare truth that it is learning that it puts its talents out to the greatest usury the more it concentrates them on the child.

The title of this chapter may need some justification. Throughout the whole range of classical literature, it is rarely that one comes upon a sympathetic and understanding reference to

* "The Child and Religion," p. 71 (Williams & Norgate).

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the child. Almost alone among ancient peoples, the Jews showed some concern for their children and their education. Josephus has put it on record that "our chief concern is for the nurture of our children." Elementary education was organised on a considerable scale in Palestine between the years 75 and 65 B.C., and long before that it had come to be regarded as a solemn parental duty to instruct the child in the truths of his father's faith. All this goes to show how highly the Jew evaluated the child; and the tenderness of our Lord towards little children was in keeping with the national tradition. From Him has descended the Christian respect for childhood which has expressed itself in a thousand and one ways in social and legal institutions.

This is not the place to trace the advance which has been made in the political and economic treatment of the child. The truth is that this aspect of history can scarcely be said to have begun until a little over a century ago, and it certainly cannot be said to be yet complete. The recent Children Act brings us a step further on the way, and some day the child will be treated as he should be. In the Church the place of the child has always been recognised with more or less clearness. The

The Modern Discovery of the Child

Middle Ages did not maintain the earlier tradition in respect of children's education, but after the Reformation there was a considerable revival in this direction both in the Roman and the Reformed Churches.

The solicitude of the Church for the child was not confined to religious instruction. It sought to do something for the general education of its children, and the impulse which lay behind the beginnings of modern elementary education was essentially religious. But it is only in comparatively recent years that educational theory has become in any way radically scientific. It needed many long years of educational experience to discover the real child. The scientific study of childhood may be said to be almost a product of the last generation. It is true that Pestalozzi, Oberlin, Robert Owen, and especially Froebel had done a great pioneer work in this direction, and many early conclusions are not yet superseded. But it has been left to the closing quarter of the last century to bring child study to its proper prominence, and it can hardly be said that we are yet in the region of finality in the matter of our conclusions.

Yet it can hardly be maintained that there is anything peculiarly new in the results of child

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study. What one feels in reading modern works on the child (and they are legion) is that they tell us little that we did not know. But this is inevitable. The only materials for child study are children, and practically the only available method of child study is observation. Recollection and retrospection may help, but the data they provide are apt to be distorted and discoloured by the intervening years. What child study has done is to sort and classify those impressions which we all gather who study children with understanding and sympathy. The result of this process has been to give us a view of childhood as a whole which we did not possess before. Instead of a muddle of heterogeneous impressions from which no clear inference could be drawn, child study has given us a coherent scientific view of the processes of development in the child.

Most of all, it has taught us anew to study the child as a child. One of the watchwords of Sunday school reform is the "bane of adultism." By this is meant the fallacy that the child is simply the adult in miniature; that the difference between the boy and the man is simply one of degree and not at all a difference of kind. But we are gradually learning to use Professor Adams' comparison--that the boy is

The Modern Discovery of the Child

no more a little man than the grub is a little butterfly or the tadpole a little frog. This is perhaps an extreme way of putting it, but it contains much sound doctrine. Childhood is a stage of development with its own peculiar characteristics, and it is no use expecting in a child, even on a reduced scale, the same processes of thought as one finds in the adult. "All children," says Walter Bagehot, "have a world of their own as distinct from that of the grown-up people who gravitate around them as the dreams of girlhood from our prosaic life; as the ideas of the kitten that plays with the falling leaves from those of her carnivorous mother that catches mice and is sedulous in her domestic duties."*

All this may sound very trite and commonplace, but I think we shall find how necessary it is to emphasise it when we come to consider the way the religious nature of the child has been dealt with in the past. It has been assumed that the spiritual experience of the child must proceed upon the same lines as those of the adult; on a smaller scale, perhaps, but identical in all essential points. In spite of the evidence of Scripture to the contrary the

* "Literary Studies," vol. i. p. 43.

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child has been regarded as a little sinner whose great and supreme need is conversion, and the conversion of the child and of the adult are held to involve the same stereotyped sequence of experiences.

The study of religious psychology and a more intelligent study of the Scriptures are helping to deliver us from this fallacy of hyper-evangelicalism which never had any solid foundation in Scripture or in reason. God has many ways of bringing men to Himself, and Timothy is as true a type as Paul. "The religious life as I have known it," says the late R. W. Dale, "has commonly originated in a sense of the loneliness of the soul that has not found God, or of the incompleteness of life when there is no distinct vision of its infinite horizons; or it has sprung from a desire to reach a perfection which is inaccessible apart from the divine power and grace; or there has been great sorrow and the heart has turned to God for consolation; or the authority of Christ has appealed to conscience and has constrained the submission of the will; or a man has discovered that the religious faith of his wife or his child or his friend is the source of a power and elevation and peace which he thinks that he would like to possess; or there has been a

The Modern Discovery of the Child

vague impression that there would come to him in answer to trust in Christ and to prayer, and as the result of the persistent endeavour to do Christ's will, some great undefined and unknown good." * This is substantially the experience of every working minister, and it is simply not the fact that even among grown people the passage into an established Christian life always follows the same pathway. Much less, therefore, is it likely to be true that a child has to pass through that set of experiences which a certain school holds to be inseparable from the phenomenon of conversion.

Horace Bushnell, who did not write from a psychological standpoint, said in 1847 that the aim of Christian education is "that the child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise." † This definition sounds correct enough, and few people would nowadays have any difficulty in accepting it. But a proper recognition of what it implies would really revolutionise our whole conception of the business of the Sunday school. It has undoubtedly been the habit of the Church "to form its conception of humanity

* "Christian Doctrine," p. 252.

† Quoted in "The Religion of a Mature Mind," by G. A. Coe, to whom I owe the whole of this paragraph.

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from the adult members of the race and to conceive of the process of salvation under the limitations thus resulting. . . . Failure to secure the point of view of the child consciousness wrought havoc in many directions. One of its most obvious results is the undue exaltation of the understanding and the deliberate will in religion. Man was defined as the rational animal. He was supposed to base action upon insight, so that the characteristic human formula was supposed to prescribe—first, knowledge of the truth; then, conduct in accordance therewith. Hence the Catechism and doctrinal instruction became the staple of religious training. The theory was simple and obvious: Let the child first learn the way of life; then let him choose it for himself.”

The current controversy concerning religious education in the State schools has been waged without any effective voice being raised to proclaim the injustice of dogmatic teaching—not to the dissenting ratepayer, but to the child. The attempt to inscribe a doctrinal scheme upon the mind of the child is to commit a real violence against the child. Adult beliefs, however finely minced, are not “milk for babes,” and the real problem of religious education, if ecclesiastical leaders

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could only see it, is not that of implanting adult beliefs in the mind of the child, to be stored up for use when the child comes to years of discretion, but rather here and now to develop a child's religion in the child. In this religion there is little room for the reason and the deliberate will, for these belong to a later stage of growth. But there are plenty of means whereby a real religious life may be fostered in the child. All the imitative, impulsive and habit-forming faculties may be utilised to this end. The child is essentially religious from the beginning, and the business of religious education is so to use these faculties that the child shall in due time emerge into a definite conscious Christian life.

IV

THE GROWING CHILD

CHILD study has not only shown us that childhood is a period of development and therefore of constant change, but it has marked out the successive stages of this development with as much precision as the case allows. The business of religious education, both in respect of the arrangement of its materials and its general organisation, requires some knowledge and recognition of the actual process of the child's growth.

The subdivision of the period of the child's development is, of course, a matter of averages. It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the different stages, for they merge imperceptibly one into the other. The fact nevertheless remains that in each of these stages the child has a distinctive outlook upon life; he reacts to the peculiar stimuli that are adapted to that particular stage; and his mental processes are different from what they have been or will be in the rest. Psychologists

The Growing Child

vary a little in their indication of the ages at which these various stages begin and end; but they all agree in saying that their figures are only approximations. The main divisions are as follows:—

- I. Infancy, up to about six years.
- II. Childhood.
 - (a) Early, to eight or nine years.
 - (b) Later, to thirteen years.
- III. Adolescence.
 - (a) Early, to sixteen years.
 - (b) Middle, to eighteen years.
 - (c) Later, to a point between twenty-one and twenty-four years.

As the Sunday school proper only covers children up to the age of sixteen or thereabout, we need not include in our present survey the last two stages of adolescence. A few general words will be said about the other periods. It should, however, be understood beforehand that the ages given above refer to boys. Girls seem to pass from one stage to another rather (and sometimes very much) earlier than boys. There is usually a difference of at least one year in the time at which girls and boys enter the stage of adolescence.

It should also be understood that the following

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account only deals with the characters of the various stages in so far as they affect the work of religious education; and that implies that we shall in the main consider the conditions under which the religious impulse develops. The theory of racial recapitulation has been prayed in aid to help us to a correct view of the mode of child development; but it has comparatively little help to give us beyond a general confirmation of the main positions which students had adopted in reference to this matter. In some respects, indeed, inferences which have been drawn from this theory respecting the religious development of children are incorrect. For instance, it has been concluded that, because animism represents the most rudimentary phase of the religious life of the race, the young child is also animistic. But the animism of the young child is insignificant compared to the place he gives to his parents even in his earliest scheme of things.

1. *Infancy*.—The very first problem of the Sunday school in dealing with the child is his restlessness. This is due to an excess of energy produced by the inevitable working of natural processes. The teacher who imagines that it is his business to keep the child still has not

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grasped the meaning of this phenomenon. It is a thing not to be checked, but to be used. And the strong imitative instinct of the child at this time indicates one avenue at least along which this restlessness should be allowed to exercise itself. Of course, the thing to be imitated must be some definite act; and it is clear that no Sunday school system which does not provide for this restlessness by means of action songs and other organised activities is adequate.

The child begins very early to feel the challenge of the world about him. Eyes, ears, fingers are receiving impressions on every side, and new ones continually. Nature, every-day life and his immediate environment supply him with a thousand and one untold and strange things. He will want to know a little—a few simple things; and this is therefore the time when the great first lessons (which are also the last) of nature are most easily suggested and assimilated.

Imagination in the strict sense is in infancy only rudimentary. An unbalanced, untrammelled fancy is operating; and every one who knows children at all knows what wonderful transformations the nursery furniture is capable of in the mind of the child. But the

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rudimentary character of the constructive imagination makes it impossible for the child to assimilate anything but the very simplest story. The credulity of the child will lead him to believe anything that his teacher may tell him; but it is clear that he cannot take in anything of which he cannot form a mental image. The simple story, the net result of which is a contribution to the formation of the child's mental "atmosphere," is the staple of Sunday school education at this stage. Even so simple a thing as pointing a moral is inadmissible, because it is generally useless. What should be regarded as the substitute for the moral is an imitable quality in the story itself.

2. *Early childhood.*—Up to this point the child has been an individualist whose interests revolve about himself. But as he passes out of infancy he begins to be conscious of himself as a social being. With the emergence of this sense comes a whole range of new and well-defined characteristics. The contact with other personalities makes the child more sensible of his own. He begins to feel himself. What was a year ago an aimless restlessness has become a desire to do something *real*. The doing will still be imitative; and the

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range of imitable things is enlarged by the child's contact with others. Yet during this period the child becomes increasingly sensitive to suggestion. The power of initiative is exceedingly rudimentary.

What is really the outstanding characteristic of this period is the appearance of the sense of moral order. The child finds that the group to which he belongs has its own laws, obedience to which brings happiness, disobedience pain. These rules are as yet purely external things, and the child finds himself in a strait between his natural impulses and this outer order. Little by little the external order, however, finds an echo in the child's own soul, and the conflict becomes increasingly inward. The real problem of this period is the cultivation of the child's inner response to the external order—to establish the law in the heart; and this is done partly by gradually giving such simple reasons for the law as the child can appreciate, but most of all by teaching him to honour it by being ourselves loyal to it.

Imagination is strongly constructive at this period, and as reason is not yet troublesome, there is very little that the child is incapable of forming a mental picture of. This is the age of the fairy tale and the wonder story, of

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stories full of movement and dramatic action. While the chief element in the religious instruction of this period is still the self-contained and complete story, it may be now a story of a much more complex character than hitherto. During this period memory develops a quality of retentiveness which goes on throughout the next stage as well. This is the time, therefore, for beginning to learn such things as have to be learnt by rote.

3. *Later childhood.*—In later childhood the social instinct has become a really powerful force ; and though the child's sense of his own personality is increasingly strong, yet during this period a working balance between the two things is arrived at. This is the age at which boys naturally constitute themselves into gangs, and boys and girls become capable of the more organised kind of play. The lad who, at the beginning of this period, got into the football team and played mostly for his own glorification, by the end of it has learned to merge his own personal ambition in a desire for the success of his side. This particular tendency is invaluable to the Sunday school teacher if he can turn it into the channels of "*class esprit de corps*," and this is the thing that gives value to competitions between classes in

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the matter of regularity and punctuality of attendance and similar things.

This is the period of hero worship, especially the worship of heroes whose life has been full of adventure. The lever which this puts into the teacher's hand is of incalculable value. It moreover enables us to introduce a greater measure of continuity into the teaching. But the thread which is to secure the continuity is the personal interest. The child is interested in persons, and the organised teaching during this period should gather around a person.

4. *Early adolescence*.—With the beginning of adolescence there is a very considerable change in the child. He is now in the stage of transition from childhood to maturity; physical and mental changes go on with a great deal of activity. The social instinct is operating very strongly, but on a more reasoned basis than hitherto. Curiously, however, in spite of the strong social instinct, the period is marked by an anti-sexual temper. Boys and girls at this stage are not usually at their best when they are together. The hero worship instinct is still at work, but there is a growing demand for a broader treatment. The hero is wanted in a more or less suitable historical background. The quality which chiefly evokes

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admiration is physical strength—this is the time when the boy becomes anxious about the size and hardness of his own biceps. It is, however, not impossible at this stage to point out that while physical strength is a thing to be desired, yet moral strength and moral courage are finer and nobler things.

Of supreme importance at this period is his spiritual sensitiveness. The entire spiritual nature is thrown into the melting pot. What shape it will take will in great measure depend upon the kind of mould prepared by previous education. If the spontaneous activities, the gifts of memory and comradeship, the power of imagination and the instinct of hero worship have been properly dealt with, it ought to be a natural thing that the boy or girl who arrives at this stage, which brings with it a strong sense of individuality and personal responsibility, should be spontaneously led to make a life choice and that the right one. Still, a good deal has to be done in this period itself. There should be much careful observation, which entails a good deal of personal intercourse between teacher and pupil. There should be judicious stimulation and wise appeal. The reasonableness of the service of Christ should be emphasised—for the boy

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and the girl are already conscious of reasoning faculties, though they are as yet elementary and crude.

One thing may be remarked generally. This process is one of *unfolding*. Each stage brings out some new power. While all that has been previously gained is preserved, some new potentiality appears gradually on the scene, strengthening or modifying all the rest, and itself being modified or strengthened by the next new arrival. There is an instinctive effort to secure a series of proper adjustments—this is the actual process which is going on during the successive stages—and when one adjustment has been secured, the time is ripe for the commencement of another stage of the process.

The business of religious education may and ought to begin at the earliest possible moment. If it is properly conducted, the normal result is a definite religious standing arrived at in early adolescence. It is now our duty to enquire whether it is possible to organise our Sunday schools and their work in such a way as to secure this progressive treatment of the developing religious and moral powers of childhood. Its success will, of course, depend largely upon the kind of atmosphere in

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which a child is living outside the Sunday school. But practical experience goes far to show that it is possible for the Sunday school to do all this and secure the desired consequences, whatever and however hostile the outer atmosphere may be.

V

THE CASE FOR REORGANISATION

THE discussion in the previous chapter will, among other things, have yielded the explanation of the extreme difficulty of maintaining discipline in a large body of children of different ages. The ultimate secret of discipline is attention, and apart from a free use of the appeal to the eye it is a matter of simple psychological impossibility to secure and to keep the sustained and undivided attention of a large mixed group of children. There are some—a very few—persons of singular charm and force of personality who are able to do so. The rest of us cannot, and the reason is a simple one. The very fact that one section of the children is interested almost amounts to a proof that the rest are not. For children, as the last chapter has shown, at different points in their development respond to different stimuli; they are interested in different things; and what interests one group is almost sure to leave some or all of the rest uninterested and

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inattentive. The consequence is the certain decline of order.

For effective religious education one of the first essential conditions is reverence ; and the secret of reverence is order. I am speaking, of course, of children. In later life, the feeling of reverence, like personal morality, may rest upon a reasoned inner foundation ; but in dealing with children the first lesson in reverent conduct must be taught by insisting upon order from without. In the Sunday school the particular occasions for teaching reverence are the opening and closing exercises. It is of course necessary that the entire school hour should be conceived in the light of an act of worship ; but it will possess this character most obviously in the collective devotions of the whole group at the beginning and end of the hour. If these lack reverence, then the whole business and work of the school is seriously handicapped throughout. Here, at these points, the discipline of the Sunday school should be perfect.

But as a matter of fact these are the very points at which the discipline of the school is usually at its worst. The reason will have been already surmised. Devotional exercises in themselves have no capacity for commanding

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the interest and the attention of the young. They only do so in the measure that they possess a character to which children can respond. And the devotional exercises have not yet been devised which can touch and carry with them and keep the attention of any given mixed mass of children.

The question of the form that the devotional exercises should take is not here being raised. One thing appears certain, namely, that no devotional exercises are likely to be wholly successful with children which are not partly at least liturgical in form. It is of the essence of the matter that the children should have a responsible share in the worship. This is, however, beside the immediate point. What I desire to emphasise is, that the necessity of reorganisation forces itself upon us on the very threshold of the school hour.

The condition of reverent worship is that the children shall be able to follow intelligently and share in the devotional exercises. These exercises must, therefore, be adapted to the particular needs and capacities of the children. But since these needs and capacities vary in growing children, both in character and extent, there must be a different devotional exercise appropriate to each of the developing

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periods of childhood. I do not say that there need be a difference in essential *form* (though it is certain that the younger the children are, the larger should be the use of music in their devotions), but there must be real differentiation of thought content and of verbal expression. The only way to secure this is by dividing up the large mass of children into different groups according to their stage of development and conducting their opening and closing exercises apart.

That all this is no mere theory will be readily attested by all who have any experience of "graded" schools. The first and most obvious characteristic of these schools is their excellent discipline. Schools which were once notoriously disorderly have by this simple process of grading been transformed into homes of seamliness and order. The reverence secured in the opening exercises has raised the entire tone of the school hour, and the *morale* of the children outside the school has in many cases been incalculably improved.

But it is not merely on this score that the reorganisation of the Sunday school is necessary. The time has come for a determined effort to eliminate the element of haphazard and casualness from the work of the

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Sunday school. As things are at present the only practical unity in our schools is the unity of the register; and that does not carry us very far. Each teacher, for all practical purposes, runs his class as an isolated group. The lesson has little or no reference to the general scheme of teaching—even if, indeed, there be such a scheme to which it might have reference. The relationship of the teacher and that of his class to the whole organisation is vague and undefined; and, save only for a rough classification of the scholars according to age, there is no real attempt to respect the natural processes and stages of growth. Compare this state of things with what may be seen in even a second-rate elementary school. There the school is one complete organism, made up of units related to one another in accordance with a definite scheme. Every part is completely co-ordinated with the rest; and there is a definite and studied progression in the content of the instruction. Not one class could drop out without a fatal disorganisation of the rest. I am aware that the actual problem of the Sunday school differs in some important respects from that of the elementary schools; but that does not change the fact that both schools are working upon

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the same kind of material. And the complete recognition on the part of one of the fact that the most distinctive thing about the material it deals with is that it is undergoing a process of natural and inevitable development should certainly be a lesson to the other.

It is not possible usually, and it is questionable whether it is ever quite necessary, to carry through in the Sunday school the entire scheme of classification which obtains in the elementary school. But it can hardly be questioned that there should be an effort to adapt the actual content of the teaching to the general needs of the children at the different periods of growth.

This brings us to the problem of "graded lessons." That graded lessons are necessary is beyond argument. What is not quite clear is the extent and the minuteness of grading which are necessary. The American Sunday School Association, which stood so long and so uncompromisingly for the Uniform Lesson, has yielded to the growing demand for a scheme of graded lessons, and with characteristic American thoroughness is devising a scheme which provides for practically every year of the child's school life. There are besides this several other schemes drawn out with the same

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comprehensive intention. But quite apart from the consideration whether this great elaboration is altogether pædagogically sound, it may be seriously questioned whether it may not prove fatal to the scheme. It requires a very large and detailed machinery to secure its thorough operation, and it necessitates a very much higher degree of teacher training to carry it through adequately than we are yet within hail of either in America or in this country. To dump a complete scheme of graded lessons—especially when this scheme is avowedly only an alternative—upon the Sunday school world is to invite a very serious confusion. The work of grading Sunday school instruction must be done by stages, and any attempt at great elaboration is likely at present to defeat the end it is intended to serve.

A very little change in the present arrangement of Sunday school lessons would meet all the immediate practical necessities. Already the infant stage is provided for in more than one admirable series of appropriate lessons. For the periods of later childhood and early adolescence, the International Lesson is on the whole suitable. Especially now that the British section of the International Lesson

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Committee has equal standing with the American and includes among its members well-known Biblical scholars of the first rank, we may look forward to a more scientific arrangement of lesson material. A great desideratum is a scheme of appropriate lessons for the period of early childhood, for which the International is too advanced. Indeed the whole question of the treatment of this period in the Sunday school needs the thorough investigation and revision which have been meted out to the Primary Department.

The policy of the Sunday school must henceforth clearly be determined by the necessity for appropriate treatment of groups of children classified broadly on the basis of the developing periods. To secure this, the school must be thoroughly departmentalised. Each department has to carry the child through a stage of his growth, and it should be conducted with this end consistently in view. This means that the teaching shall be at a certain angle throughout the department (not of course with a cast-iron rigidity, for a good deal must be left to the common sense and initiative of the teacher). When each department has its business cut out for it, and each teacher in the department understands generally the point of view which

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is to obtain throughout the department, we shall secure that homogeneity and continuity of aim and treatment which have been lacking hitherto. This, however, necessitates the contemplation of the Sunday school as a whole, the recognition of the essentially progressive character of its function, and in the light of this an intelligent differentiation between the various stages of the process. But this differentiation can only be secured in an effective way by a process of departmentalising; and the ideal Sunday school will surely be that in which there will be so many departments, each closely integrated into the whole and co-ordinated with the others, each having its own peculiar point of view and its own appropriate atmosphere, and each having officers and teachers thoroughly versed in its practical requirements.

VI

THE PRINCIPLE OF GRADING

How should the Sunday school be graded? What principle should determine the limits of the various departments? How many departments should there be?

Before any attempt is made to answer these questions it should be premised that it is not the present aim to lay down a hard and fast method of grading. The extent to which grading is possible is contingent upon a variety of circumstances, such as the availability of a proper *personnel* and adequacy of accommodation. The right principle is: Grade right up to the limits of your capacity. Go as far as you can. It is sheer folly to imagine that, because one cannot go the whole way, it is no use to go any part of the way. The further one can go the better; but it is far better to go a little way than not to go at all.

Of course, there is already a good deal of grading in Sunday schools. The infants, for

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instance are usually separated from the rest of the school, and that is all to the good. Frequently there is also an effort to segregate the elder scholars ; but it can hardly be said that there is anything like a universal recognition of the need and desirability of grading the general mixed school which consists of scholars between the infant stage and those of fifteen or sixteen years of age.

Grading should correspond generally to the developing periods, and should therefore proceed upon some such system as the following:—

I. Primary stage (corresponding to the period of infancy and the first part of early childhood, *i.e.*, up to about eight years of age).

This should contain—

- (a) The Cradle Roll Department.
- (b) The Beginners' Department.
- (c) The Primary Department proper.

II. Secondary stage (corresponding to the later part of early childhood and later childhood, *i.e.*, up to twelve or thirteen years). This should contain—

- (a) The Junior Preparatory Department, for children up to ten years of age.
- (b) The Junior Department.

III. Adolescent stage (corresponding to the

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period of early adolescence). This should contain—

(a) The Senior Boys' Department.

(b) The Senior Girls' Department.

This system follows the generally accepted plan of grading with the exception that it interposes in the junior stage a Preparatory Department ; and in the adolescent stage insists upon separate departments for boys and girls. The reason for these variations will appear when the various stages are discussed in detail. Meantime it is enough to say that, provided there is accommodation for so many departments, there can be no expert objection to this plan. Its justification lies in the extreme difficulty of the internal grading of the departments themselves to an extent sufficient to allow proper treatment in the one department, say, of a child of eight and another of twelve.

With regard to the nomenclature of the departments, while it is desirable to secure uniformity as far as possible, in the above plan it is left open in view of the fact that as the practice of grading can scarcely be held to be yet out of the experimental stage it is unwise to stereotype a set of names. The great matter is to differentiate between the departments whatever names we give them.

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Each of these departments should be a complete self-contained community—an entire Sunday school in itself. It meets by itself for its opening and closing exercises.

It may be desirable to meet at this point a possible objection, namely, that this method breaks up the unity of the school. As a matter of fact, in actual practice, it does not appear to do so; and in any case there are ways by which the sense of unity may be preserved. So far as the teachers are concerned, the teachers' meeting will serve this purpose; and for the children there certainly should be periodical mass meetings of the whole school. These meetings should, however, not be too frequent, as that would interfere with the continuity of the teaching. They might be held quarterly, and some special character (such as emphasis upon missions or temperance) should certainly be given to them. It would be of great advantage to invite parents and friends to these aggregate gatherings of the whole school. Prize distributions and other festival occasions during the week will also contribute materially to the preservation of the feeling of unity.

Each department should have its own set of officers, a superintendent, a deputy-superintendent, a secretary, and a treasurer. There will

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be, of course, corresponding officers for the whole school.

It will perhaps be conducive to clearness if we deal with the functions of the departmental officers first. The work of the treasurer hardly calls for discussion. He will see that the offerings are duly made, counted, entered and handed over to the general treasurer. The division of labour between the superintendent and his deputy must be largely a matter of personal arrangement.

The departmental superintendent must know exactly the place which his department is to fill in the entire plan. The maintenance of the proper atmosphere and point of view will devolve on him. It is clear that this will necessitate close personal touch and frequent conferences with the teachers. For the superintendent has to be something more than a mere "boss." He has a very much wider function than that of policing his department. He is to be the guide, philosopher and friend of his teachers, and the pastor of his scholars.

All this will entail certain personal qualities in the superintendent, which are, however, too obvious to require discussion. The point which requires emphasis is, that the departmental superintendent is not merely responsible

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for good order and the proper working of the organisation, but is expected to exert a certain personal influence upon all who come within his authority. He is not to be a mere cog in the machinery, but should always possess a considerable liberty of personal initiative. It is no part of any scheme of grading to secure a rigid uniformity in all departments. A superintendent, if he is to do his work well, must be free to work his department along his own lines, provided that he is always loyal to the policy of the whole school.

The work of the departmental secretary consists largely in registration. It is his business to see that the registers are properly kept, and that returns are made of attendances and absences to the general secretary. In conjunction with the superintendent he makes all necessary communications by way of report or request to the governing body of the school.

The unity of the school will naturally centre in the person of the general superintendent. To him will fall the duty of co-ordinating the departments and keeping them in touch with one another. If he sees that one of the departments is falling out of line with the rest, or that the senior classes are not furnishing an adequate supply of young assistants for the

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Primary Department, it is his business to investigate the trouble and prescribe the remedy. His will be the work of admitting new scholars and of allocating them to their proper departments, the supervision of the promotion of the scholars from one department to the next, and especially the oversight and proper disposition of those scholars who are passing out of the Senior Department. Upon him devolves the difficult business of securing and appointing teachers and of judging their capacity. And on those occasions when the whole school meets together he will naturally be responsible for the conduct of the gathering.

The general secretary is the statistical officer of the whole school, the recorder of teachers' meetings and the school's correspondent. It is through him that the school will keep in touch with the local Sunday School Union and other related bodies.

No attempt is being made to give a detailed definition of the function of these officers. I am trying to indicate in a general way the place they will fill in the scheme. I wish to deviate, however, from my general plan so far as to say a special word upon the work of registration. This work is exceedingly important, and its use is far more than statistical.

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It consists of two parts—the registration of members and the tabulation of attendances and similar matters. The major portion of this work will naturally fall upon the departmental secretaries. It is their business to see that the roll and the class registers of their several departments are properly kept from week to week and undergo annual and quarterly revision. But in a graded school there should be a supplementary system of registration by means of which a record can be kept of the history of every scholar during his school life and, as far as possible, afterwards. The “card system” is admirably suited for this purpose. Let a card be set apart for every scholar on his entry into the school. On that insert all necessary particulars, such as address, father’s name, date of birth; and let more particulars be added as occasion arises. The appearance of such a card after a few years would be something like this:—

SMITH, JOHN : 16, High Street, son of James Smith ;
born April 5, 1896.

Entered Primary Department, June, 1901. Passed into
Junior Department, January, 1904. Intermediate
Department, January, 1907.

Father died March 13, 1907. Passed Junior S.S.U.
Examination, March, 1907.

Passed into Senior Department, March, 1910. Left
day school, June, 1910. Went to Jones & Co., 16,
Oxford Road, as errand boy.

Etc., etc.

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It will be necessary to have a box in each department, and in this the cards should be kept in alphabetical order. As the scholar passes from one department to another the card goes with him ; and when at length he passes out of the school, his card will find its way into the minister's card box, which will contain a record of the history of all the young people who have gone through the school. How much would the pastor of a city church not give for such a record ! Its value in the prevention of leakage would be incalculable.*

The slow progress of the grading movement arises from two causes, the lack of proper *personnel* and the inadequacy of accommodation. For the former of these it is impossible to find a radical remedy save that of investing the Sunday school and its work with the proper honour. We have in the Churches a sufficiency of persons who are quite adequate to the work ; and if the work were stately and practically recognised as a serious contribution to the extension of the kingdom of God, I am convinced that there would be no lack of volunteers. At the same time it should be made clear that there is no room except for those persons who

* For those who prefer the system of book registers, a very convenient register for this purpose, devised by Mr. Arnold Herschell, is published by Philip, Son & Nephew, Liverpool.

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will acquaint themselves by serious study and observation with the necessary conditions of the work. Our superintendents must not only be devout men, and men versed in the Scriptures, but men also who have a working knowledge of the psychology of the problem of religious education. This requirement is not, however, the formidable matter that it looks. For there is available to-day a sufficiency of relevant literature, not too academic or abstruse for the layman to be able to peruse it intelligently. It should certainly be regarded as a condition of acceptance that a superintendent should be prepared even at some cost of time and study to equip himself thoroughly for his task.

It is impossible to over-emphasise this point. The success of a department will depend largely upon the sustained consistency of its spirit and method, and it will devolve upon the superintendent to mould his teachers into conformity with the departmental ideal. He must be in some measure a teacher-trainer.

Still, even though such a demand be made upon the superintendents, I cannot believe that when the school comes to be regarded as the honourable and exalted service that it really is, and when it is treated and organised

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seriously and scientifically, there will be any lack of workers. To the end there will be need of personal canvassing and personal invitation, but this will be no great or hopeless task when once the school takes its proper place in the economy of Christian service.

The defective accommodation of Sunday schools is admittedly a very serious obstacle in the way of adequate grading. It is to be hoped that in future those bodies which are charged with the oversight of Sunday schools in the various Churches will make an effort to secure that, wherever building operations are in prospect, there shall be adequate provision made for a properly graded school. These bodies should have by them copies of approved plans to be sent for the guidance of those who are proposing to erect new buildings; and they should not hesitate to exert the greatest possible pressure on behalf of proper Sunday school accommodation.

In the meantime, however, the great majority of schools, and especially of rural schools, are very seriously handicapped by poor accommodation; and the only possible way of grading in their case is to arrange for the different departments to meet at different times. Most Sunday schools meet in the afternoon; but it

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has been successfully arranged in many cases for the various departments to use the available accommodation at different hours. After all, though we may not have enough room for all the departments at one time, there is enough time during daylight on Sunday for all the departments to meet separately. There are difficulties in the way of this plan in many places, but a little elasticity and determination would secure a great deal more grading everywhere than might at first sight seem possible.

VII

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE relation of the Sunday school to the Church or congregation with which it is associated is at present very indeterminate. It is recognised vaguely that the ultimate responsibility for the Sunday school rests with the court of elders, or deacons, or whatever the body may be that is charged with the general spiritual oversight of the Church. The school naturally falls under their jurisdiction; but there has not usually been any very clear notion of the nature of this jurisdiction or of the way of giving practical effect to it. The consequence is that in a great many cases the school has drifted out of vital touch with the Church; and there has too often been something like resentment on the part of Sunday school officers with what they have conceived to be the undue and unwarranted interference of the office-bearers of the Church. Sometimes this alienation has gone so far that

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the minister has been regarded as something of an intruder in the school.

Before we can make any headway at all, this situation must be thoroughly revised. It is useless to talk of checking leakage unless we bring the Sunday school into the closest possible harmony with the life of the Church. The session or deacons' court, or whatever the congregational executive may be, ought at the very earliest opportunity to assume its direct responsibility for the Sunday school. There is no other way of linking the school effectively and vitally with the rest of the organised activities of the Church. The natural sequel of this is that the minister will be at the head of the Sunday school, as he is, or ought to be, at the head of every other department of congregational activity.

Perhaps the minister has himself to blame more than anyone else that he finds himself occasionally something of an outlander in his own school. At the same time there are extenuating circumstances. To begin with, his training has not usually enforced the importance of the work of the Sunday school. Our theological colleges are not yet convinced of the urgency of the Sunday school; and it is idle under the circumstances to expect

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theological students to realise the place and the function of the Sunday school in the life of the Church. In addition to this, the conditions of ministerial life at the present time leave the minister very little time or opportunity to acquaint himself with the problem and the working of the Sunday school. In early Christian days there were (not to speak of apostles and prophets) evangelists and pastors and teachers. Nowadays the three offices are vested in one person—which, while it is no doubt convenient, is exceedingly unapostolic. The modern minister is a kind of factotum, much of whose time is frittered away in many trivial and futile jobs. If he be a city minister, he is generally involved, as the representative of his congregation, in a complex of entanglements which entail the expenditure of considerable time and energy. Much of this is no doubt necessary and inevitable. But there should certainly be a revision and a readjustment of ministerial duties if essential things are not to be neglected or scamped. Especially it should be made possible for every minister to give time and thought and work to the problems of the Sunday school. If not he, who should be the leader and inspirer of the officers and teachers of the school. And how shall he be

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either if he is not frequently to be found in the school and among the teachers ?

If the congregational executive thinks it wise to devolve the control and oversight to any other body, it is of course free to do so. Frequently it is wise in doing so. But it should never divest itself of its responsibility for and its authority over the Sunday school. Perhaps the best arrangement is that by which the congregational executive appoints a committee composed of some of its own number with the general and departmental superintendents of the Sunday school, the leaders of Bible classes, the superintendents of institutes, clubs, and young people's societies, and invests the committee with the entire business of overseeing and directing the work among the young. It is clear that if the Sunday school is to be thoroughly co-ordinated with all the other organisations dealing with young life something of this kind ought to be done. For obviously the problem of leakage must partly be solved by a provision for introducing leaving scholars to, and absorbing them into, senior organisations. The external affairs of the Sunday school, its financial and other requirements, are subjects which would naturally come within the purview of such a committee ;

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but I deem it the most important of its functions that it should help to bridge the existing gulf between the Sunday school and the organisations for young people beyond school age. This part of its office can only be discharged by personal oversight of scholars who are leaving the school, and by seeing them safely established in the institutes and societies which are intended for them at this stage of their life. Of this committee the minister should be the chairman.

For the domestic affairs of the Sunday school the natural and time-honoured authority is the teachers' meeting. This should certainly be retained in any scheme of reorganisation. It is perhaps wise to vest certain executive powers in a committee of the superintendents; but for the main general business of the school the teachers' meeting is indispensable. But it has a very distinct value beyond its utility for transacting business. It affords a centre of unity for the whole school. It has further the invaluable effect of making all the teachers feel that they have a personal stake in the school and a voice in its management. And if the minister habitually presides (as I think he should) over the teachers' meeting, it enables him to know his teachers and them to

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know him, and to feel that through him they are all bound up with the entire life of the congregation. The teachers' meeting will consist of all the officers and teachers throughout the school; and it will be found to serve an excellent purpose to admit into the meeting even the young assistants of the Primary Department. It should indeed constitute a part of their training for further service in the school.

The business of a graded school is naturally very much larger and more complex than that of a mixed school. It will be necessary therefore to leave certain departmental details to the informal judgment of the teachers and officers of departments. But the remaining business of the Sunday school will be so extensive that a *regular* teachers' meeting should be held every month. Even if there is no urgent matter demanding it, the meeting should be held without intermission. Regularity of this kind is essential to the proper working of any organisation; and it will usually be found that, where the business meetings are only occasional, the whole working of the school is loose and slipshod. In any case it will be a sufficient justification for a regular monthly meeting that part of its business should be the reception and

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consideration of reports from all the departments. Experience shows that as the school goes on in its new form, problems of a general and a local kind continually arise, and there is no way of solving these save through the teachers' meeting. It goes without saying that it belongs to the function of this meeting to discuss and decide upon applications for new equipment from the various departments, to transact all internal financial business, to prefer requests to the superior authorities for whatsoever financial supplies may be needed, and to transact all business which affects the whole school. It will devise ways not merely for perfecting its machinery but for keeping the school before the mind of the Church and insisting upon a proper recognition of the service it renders.

As under this arrangement the Church through its executive assumes responsibility for the Sunday school, it becomes responsible also for financing it. It may make financial provision for the school in any way it thinks best, but the spending power should be vested without any qualification in the teachers' meeting. There is good pædagogical reason for not devoting the school offerings to maintenance, but to some missionary or

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benevolent purpose. Maintenance should be provided for by supplies voted by the financial authority of the Church, or by means of subscriptions obtained independently, as may be deemed the wiser course. It would conduce to clearness if these two accounts were kept separately. For the expenditure on maintenance the whole body of teachers should be held responsible; and it should be the duty of the treasurer to present at the monthly meeting a report on the financial state.

There is one side of the teachers' meeting which, while it has no reference to the conduct of school business, may well be mentioned at this point. There should be, besides these meetings for the transaction of business, periodical gatherings of the teachers for devotion and conference upon the work of the school on its spiritual side. It is impossible to estimate how much of the effectiveness of the school depends upon the maintenance of the spiritual impulse of the teachers. The emphasis upon the spiritual character and end of Sunday school work should never be lost; and the spiritual power necessary to preserve the proper atmosphere and to secure the right end is best of all sought and found through concerted prayer.

VIII

THE PRIMARY STAGE

No discussion of the reorganisation of the earlier stages of the Sunday school should start without a reference to the obligation which the English Sunday school world owes to Mr. G. Hamilton Archibald. He has devoted his life to this good work; and his genial and indefatigable advocacy of the proper treatment of the very little ones in the Sunday school will bear more fruit in the coming time than even his optimism can anticipate. It is only right to say that this chapter contains very little which is not directly due to the written or spoken word of Mr. Archibald; and were it not that this little book would be inexcusably incomplete without a description of the Primary Department, I should be content to refer the reader to Mr. Archibald's own books, and especially to Miss Ethel Archibald's excellent and businesslike little volume on the Primary Department. The Sunday School Union is to be congratulated upon the farsighted policy

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which led to the retention of Mr. Archibald's services for this work.

The underlying principle of the new Primary Department is the adaptation of Froebelian methods to religious education within the limits and under the conditions of Sunday school work; in other words, to bring the Kindergarten into the Sunday school. That this principle is right is too obvious for discussion; and the success with which the problems which it involved have been worked out reflects great credit upon the assiduity and resourcefulness of those who have concerned themselves with it. The systematic subordination of the young child's native instincts to the work of religious education required great insight and sympathy; and the thriving condition of the Primary Department movement is the entire justification of its promoters.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the Primary Department has come to stay. Wherever it has been established it seems to succeed, not only in point of favour with the children and popularity with their parents, but also of those other more substantial results of which something will be presently said.

The work of the Primary Department proper begins with children of over five years of age.

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It is necessary to say something first of all with regard to the provision which is to be made for children under this age. It is probably right to exclude all children under four from the Sunday school. This perhaps cannot always be done; and it is not wise to legislate too stringently upon the point. In any case, this does not mean that the school has no concern with the children who are too young to be admitted. It is clearly a wise thing *to bespeak even the babies* for membership in the Sunday school. This is the meaning of the Cradle Roll.

At a certain point in the proceedings of the Primary Department a large sheet will be seen hanging from an easel. Beneath the ornamental heading will be found spaces for names. This is the Cradle Roll. A child is called out by the superintendent, and a miniature cradle put in his hands. Then a question is asked—“Have any of you brought the names of little baby brothers or sisters to-day for the Cradle Roll?” And one or two little mites will bring up little slips of paper containing names to be entered on the roll, with the date of birth; and then follows a simple prayer for the new babies. It is a pretty and interesting little bit of ritual, but it has a considerable use beyond this. For

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the Cradle Roll has its superintendent, generally a lady, who keeps in touch with the babies, and sends a birthday card to each one as that interesting day comes round. Not only is the child brought into relation with the Sunday school from the beginning, but the interest of his parents is awakened, and this necessarily reacts in favour of the Sunday school, not only in respect of the baby but of the other children as well. The superintendent is not, of course, confined to such names as may be brought in by the children of the Primary Department, but may add such other likely names as may be discovered in other ways.

At four years the child is invited to school. He is still too young to be admitted to the Primary Department, and so he passes meanwhile into the Beginners' Class. It is, however, wise usually to regard this class as a part of the Primary Department, and to permit it to partake in the ordinary opening and closing exercises, moving to its own special room at lesson time.

It is desirable that a room of fair dimensions should, if it is at all possible, be allocated to the beginners. If no separate room is available, some portion of the primary room should be curtained off, care being taken to secure

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sufficient light and ventilation. In this room it will be necessary to have small Kindergarten chairs, a black board, a large sand tray, and whatever other Kindergarten material can be secured. Pictures, and anything that can add to the brightness of the room, should be as plentiful as good taste requires and money permits.

In charge of the beginners there will be a superintendent, assisted by the requisite number of young "helpers." The question of the "helpers" will be considered at a later point. The organisation of the beginners' class into smaller divisions will obviously be contingent upon its size and the character of the accommodation.

If a trained Kindergarten teacher can be secured as the beginners' superintendent it is eminently desirable that it should be so, for the simple reason that in such hands the capabilities of the Kindergarten material will be very greatly increased. She will be able to devise new forms of activity, and bring in that element of change which is so essential everywhere to good teaching, and particularly to the teaching of young children.

The curriculum of the beginners' class may be based upon, indeed it should follow very

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closely, Mr. G. H. Archibald's "Bible Lessons for Little Beginners."

We come now to the Primary Department proper. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the place which a properly organised Primary Department can fill in the Sunday school. It not only sets the proper key for the child at the beginning of its Sunday school life, but it is one of the most effective means of establishing the child in its Christian life after he has passed through the school as a pupil. And not the least of the benefits which the Primary Department confers upon the school is that it goes a long way to solve the problem of the supply of teachers.

Now, what are the essentials of the Primary Department? The National Committee of Primary Work lays down the following conditions before an infant class can be regarded as attaining the standard of the Primary Department:—

1. A separate room with suitable seating accommodation.
2. A staff of officers and teachers.
3. All exercises to be conducted (with occasional brief exceptions) exclusively in the department itself.
4. Subdivided classes with a teacher for not

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more than six (preferably not more than four) scholars.

5. A weekly training and preparation class which the teachers are pledged to attend, it being understood that any teacher who is not present will not be permitted to take his class on the following Sunday.*

It will perhaps be convenient if we discuss the points which are thus raised in this order:—

I. ACCOMMODATION AND APPARATUS.

It is a characteristic feature of the Primary Department that allowance is made for the child's natural restlessness by providing for musical marches and other activities in the course of the session. This should be borne in mind in fixing upon the size of the room. It should permit reasonable scope for these movements. If there is no separate room for the beginners there ought to be some convenient corner which can be screened off for them. It is essential also that there should be a cloak-room, as hats and wraps should be removed before the beginning of the session. This cloak-room should, if possible, be large enough to enable the children to gather there

* Quoted from Archibald, "The Sunday School of Tomorrow," p. 57.

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so that they may march all together to their places in the schoolroom. It is necessary to the preservation of the proper quiet and of the atmosphere of reverence that the children should not be allowed to dribble into the room one by one. Orderly marching (to music) is essential.

Suitable seating accommodation means Kindergarten chairs for the children. It is impossible to deal properly with children perched on high chairs or set in rows on stiff benches. The appearance of the little chairs is in itself sufficient to justify them, and the children take to them with glee.

It goes without saying that the blackboard and easel should be there, and a table (always with a vase of flowers) and a piano. There should be pictures on the walls; and in these days, when very good pictures may be had at very low prices, there is no excuse for bare walls.

In addition to all this there will be a supply of some of the usual Kindergarten accessories: stiff boards, paper and pencils for drawing, sand trays, and plasticene for moulding.

It will perhaps be said at once that the mere cost of this equipment puts it outside the reach of most schools. That is probably true in many cases. The cost will depend upon the

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number of scholars to be provided for—for one department of 120 children the cost was under £30. But it is not necessary to secure all the equipment at once. Begin by getting the chairs and the sand trays, and add the other things as you go along. It is, indeed, probably wise to do so, for in that case it will be possible to develop the life of the department more solidly because it proceeds more slowly.

It is a question which might very profitably be considered by denominational committees in charge of Sunday schools whether it is not possible to establish a special fund for the purpose of making grants to enable the poorer schools to secure the necessary equipment for the establishment of a Primary Department.

2. THE STAFF.

(a) The *superintendent*, who should in most cases be a lady, must be selected with great care. If a trained infants' teacher or kindergarten can be secured, so much the better.

Apart from the necessary qualities of mind and heart, there are two things to be kept in view in the selection of a Primary superintendent. She has, first of all, to be the leader of the Primary Department in session, and should, therefore, be capable of securing and retaining

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the children's attention, and that not by resorting to the discredited expedients of much so-called discipline, but by her own attractiveness to the children and her gift of interesting them. Secondly, she will have to undertake the training of the young teachers on her staff.

These are requirements not easily satisfied, and it is clear that, before the superintendent (if she is not already a trained teacher) is able to discharge her duties, she herself will need some training. This may be obtained in one of two ways. She may attach herself in some capacity to an already existing Primary Department and remain there for such time as may be necessary to master its principles and practice; or she may (and this is far the better way when it is possible) go for a term to the training school for Sunday school workers at West Hill, Selly Oak, Birmingham, where she will have, in addition to the special training in school work, the inestimable advantage of attending Dr. Rendel Harris's classes in Scripture study. The cost of this training is not great, and certainly it is not beyond the resources of an average congregation to send one of its members through this course.*

* Particulars of this school may be obtained from Mr. Frederic Taylor, 15, Devonshire Street, London, E.C.

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(b) To the *deputy-superintendent*, what has been said of the superintendent applies equally, for it devolves upon her to take up the duties of the latter in case of absence.

The deputy-superintendent will naturally oversee the lesser details of the conduct of the department. It will fall to her to see that the apparatus is in proper order before the school session commences; that the doorkeepers are in their places; that the cloak-room is ready and straight; and that the storekeepers are up to their work.

The duties of the (c) *secretary* and (d) *treasurer* are dealt with in another chapter. They present no points which need special description.

Of immense importance to the Primary Department is—

(e) *The pianist*.—There *must* be a piano in the room, and any other instrument is practically useless. At the piano, there must be the best pianist available.

For in the Primary Department the children are not told to stand up or sit down or to be quiet. A chord or two, or a few bars of "hush music" on the piano does it all. This means that there must be the most perfect *rapport* between the superintendent and the pianist.

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Then she must be able to play (as she will, if she is a pianist at all) the necessary simple march music in the service, and especially (and not every one can do this well) to play the music of the children's hymns and action songs in the service, and during the practice of new hymns and songs. Few people can play congregational music well on the piano, and fewer still can do justice to children's hymns.

The one book *par excellence* for the Primary Department piano is the Rev. Carey Bonner's "Child Songs."

(f) *The young teachers.*—It will be noticed that the fourth requisite of a Primary Department is "subdivided classes of not more than six." To each of these subdivided classes a young teacher is appointed. These young teachers are admitted between the ages of fourteen and eighteen years. It is perhaps best to make them serve a short apprenticeship as "helpers" in the beginners' class before they are allowed to take a place in the Primary Department. To a Primary School of sixty children there will be at least ten such young teachers. If there are twenty, so much the better. There should always be a small margin over the number necessary

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for the classes, in order to supply occasional vacancies.

(g) *Doorkeepers and storekeepers.*—Some of the older boys should be pressed into this service. The opening and shutting of doors is usually attended by a good deal of unnecessary clatter, and this must be prevented if the quiet of the room is to be preserved. There ought to be a keeper for every door by which there is access into the schoolroom. The business of the storekeeper is to see to the distribution of sand trays or plasticene, or whatever the method of "expression" may be for the afternoon, and to the proper storage of these at the close of the session.

3. The third point of the National Committee has reference to the conduct of the exercises of the department. That they shall be conducted exclusively within the department itself is a rule which applies to the whole of the graded school.

The first thing which is to be aimed at in the conduct of the exercises is that they shall constitute a coherent act of worship; and if this is to be secured the worship must be of a nature to enable all the children to take their share in it. The prayers must be short and simple, and should be repeated by the children

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after the superintendent. And when the offertory is made, or children whose birthdays in the previous week are to be celebrated are called up, the occasion will be taken for suitable brief petitions. It goes without saying that the language of the prayers must be intelligible to the youngest child. Prayer never loses anything by simplicity.

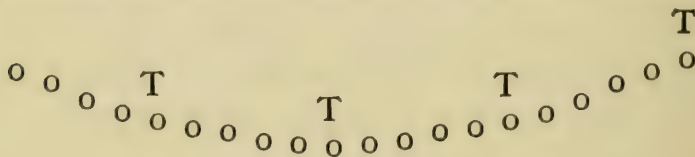
It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of a Primary Department session. The opening exercises will consist of hymns and prayers, together with suitable interludes for birthday greetings, cradle roll proceedings, taking the collection (which each child should bring up to the table, the opportunity being taken for a march round). The superintendent may also give a short bright talk upon some nature or kindred topic at some point during the first part of the proceedings. At the close of this part of the session, the beginners will file off to their own room.

The second part will consist of the lesson. This is a simple story which the young teachers have heard at their preparatory class, and which they now tell their pupils. When the story has been told, at a signal from the piano the sand trays or the plasticene are taken up and the story is "expressed."

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The use of "expression" is two-fold. First of all, it is an outlet for the child's native restlessness. Secondly, it helps to fix the lesson in the child's mind. The child who has heard the story of Moses in the bulrushes, and then takes the sand tray, and by parting the sand down the middle of the tray makes a Nile, then with little strips of green paper, (provided by the teacher) plants the bulrushes, and then hides among them a tiny paper boat (for a wicker basket), is not likely to forget the story very quickly.

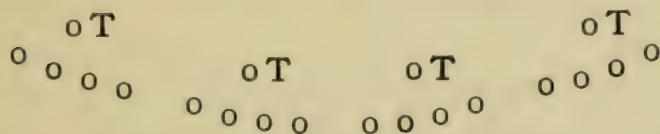
The question may occur how the mass of the children are broken up into small classes for the lesson. It will perhaps be easier to explain by means of a diagram. The chairs are arranged in the shape of an arc thus :—



Assuming that there are four children in each class, the first teacher and his class will occupy the first five seats. The next teacher (for each teacher marches from the anteroom into the schoolroom at the head of his class) will take the sixth chair and his pupils the next four; and so on. In the diagram the teacher's place

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is marked with a T. Then at a signal from the piano, at the proper time for the lesson, each teacher picks up his chair noiselessly and deposits it in front of his four pupils. The appearance of the row then will be:—



There will be, of course, inevitably a little tendency to gather together more closely, but the noise which is thus made is practically negligible.

There can be no question as to the value of the Primary Department method. The interest is increased immensely, and astonished mothers have been often known to come and see for themselves this wonderful thing which proves so irresistible to their little ones. Regularity of attendance is secured to a surprising extent, and the general and indiscriminate noisiness of the ordinary infants' class gives way to perfect quiet and perfect order. To see the Primary Department is to be convinced that it is the one thing needful for young children, and that it has come to stay.

It ought to be added that, in spite of the variety of its exercises, with a proper husbanding of

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time, the ordinary session need not last more than a few minutes over the hour.

4. The fourth point referred to by the National Committee has already been spoken of in connection with the young teachers. It remains to speak of—

5. THE PREPARATION CLASS.

It is always understood that when a teacher has been absent from the preparation class, he does not take his own class on the next Sunday. The wisdom of this condition is clear. But the young teachers themselves usually become so interested and enthusiastic that absences rarely occur except when they cannot be avoided.

This class does more than prepare the following Sunday's lesson. It is expressly understood that it continues the education of the young teacher. It is sometimes urged against the Primary Department that it sets exceedingly young and crude persons to do very difficult work and that it were far better that they should remain scholars for a much longer time before they are put in harness.

The answer to this objection is two-fold. First, it is a sound educational principle to make these young people finish their education

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by setting them to teach. It is precisely the same principle which we observe when we set the little ones to "express" the lesson on the sand trays. These young teachers will only confirm and intensify their own impressions by being allowed to communicate them to others.

Second, their education is not at an end when they pass into the Primary Department. For the preparation class includes a good deal more than the work of getting up the next lesson to be given. It is, to all intents and purposes, a senior Sunday school class with the teaching interest added to it.

It may be added further that the young teachers of the Primary Department do not teach anything which they do not expressly learn for that purpose in the preparation class. They tell their scholars the story which the superintendent has told them.

The Primary Department by its enlistment of young persons at this early age in the service of the Sunday school is helping to solve perhaps the most harassing of all its problems, to wit, the supply of teachers. A proportion of the older scholars are captured and trained as teachers in the Primary Department, and after three or four years' service pass on into the

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higher stages of the school. Thus the school is beginning already to produce its own teachers. More will be said on this point when we come to discuss the problem of the teacher.

One other result follows almost invariably from the introduction of young people into the Primary Department. If they have not arrived at spiritual decision before they pass into the Primary Department, they do so usually very soon after. It is almost the regular thing where a Primary Department is in operation for the young teachers to become candidates for Church membership. So that it is not merely the teacher problem that the Primary Department helps us to solve ; it makes a very considerable contribution to the solution of the problem of leakage.

IX

THE SECONDARY STAGE

THE difficulty which one who is not an expert encounters in dealing with the question of grading is that the experts do not agree among themselves. Take three examples: Mr. G. Hamilton Archibald in "The Junior Department," (p. 40), Mr. J. W. Axtell in "Grading the Sunday School" (p. 59), and Mr. Henry F. Cope in "The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice" (p. 68). I give the three schemes side by side. The nomenclature varies a little, but the divisions intended are easily recognised.

	Archibald.	Axtell.	Cope.
Beginners	4—6	—	Up to 6
Primary	6—8	4—9	6—7
Junior	9—11	9—14	8—13
Intermediate	12—18	14—18	14—17

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It will be noticed that neither Mr. Archibald's figures nor Mr. Cope's are quite continuous.

I infer that Mr. Archibald means that the the Junior Department consists of children over eight and under eleven ; and the Intermediate of those over eleven but under eighteen. Mr. Cope, on the other hand, seems to mean that the Primary (or Elementary) includes children up to eight years of age, while the next grade comprises those who are over eight but under fourteen.

Let us consider this matter of grading above the Primary Department in a little detail. I think it is safe to mark out eight years of age as our first fixed point. The second point which we have to fix is the beginning of adolescence. Axtell and, presumably, Cope make it fourteen. It is probably safer to fix it at thirteen.

What we have to decide is how we are going to deal with that body of the school which lies between eight and thirteen years of age.

Mr. Archibald makes a division at eleven years, and then includes all above that age and under eighteen years in one department. This department will inevitably be very large and cumbersome ; but there is a more serious

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criticism to be made of this classification. Between eleven and eighteen there are at least two critical points in development, the beginning of early adolescence which seems to lie between twelve and thirteen, and the beginning of middle adolescence, approximately at sixteen years. This period between eleven and eighteen years ought therefore to be divided into at least two grades. Of these the period which ends at thirteen will represent one grade. This, according to Coe, covers the stage of later childhood.

It is at least doubtful whether the children who leave the Primary Department at eight have passed out of the early childhood stage. In the eight to thirteen year old group it is therefore probable that we have two different developing periods. In any case it can hardly be supposed that the methods for children between eight and ten are likely to be quite suitable for those between twelve and thirteen years. Suppose, then, we follow the analogy of Mr. Archibald's own plan with the younger children, and divide these into two departments :—

1. Junior Preparatory, corresponding to the Primary Beginners.
2. Junior Proper, corresponding to the Primary Proper,

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The dividing point will naturally fall between ten and eleven years. This, in Professor Coe's classification, is the time of transition from early to later childhood.

Some remarks of Axtell's which follow his own description of this question of classification may be quoted not inaptly here :—

“ This scheme is suggested because it is simple and workable. Any one of a dozen other schemes may be adopted which will prove as good. It is not a question of *the* plan of work so much as of *a* plan of work. Let divisions and subdivisions be made in any feasible way so that they embrace the contemplated work in comprehensive form. Then let the adopted scheme be adhered to in close detail by every teacher and officer in every department of the school.”

What I call the Junior Preparatory Department (the name is a matter of indifference) corresponds very nearly to Mr. Archibald's Junior Department. It should, however, be understood that if it is impossible to accommodate two departments for the period between eight and thirteen years, it is probably better to treat the body of children at this stage as one department and make the next separation at the end of this period. In this case it will

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be necessary to grade the teaching within the department as far as possible. What might answer the case still better is to make a compromise between Mr. Archibald's scheme and that suggested above—that is, make one department of the children between eight and twelve years and conduct it along the lines which Mr. Archibald suggests for the Junior Department. But whether we have one department or two the same general lines will have to be followed in either case.

It cannot, however, be too strongly emphasised that these age divisions must not be followed in a blind, undeviating way. On the contrary, each child should, so far as observation can determine the fact, be moved up in accordance with its own particular rate of development. The fact that girls develop more quickly than boys should also be kept in view. A capable superintendent will soon get into the way, in co-operation with the teachers, of following the growth of the child and discovering the proper time for promotion.

During the primary stage the staple of the teaching has been the simple short story. But for the stage of early childhood, while it is better to use a self-contained story, it may be a story of a far more complex character. For

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the eight to ten year old child the story should be full of swift and dramatic movement, and a really great desideratum for this period is a syllabus of Bible and missionary stories which answer this description. Then, after ten years, the biographical interest begins to assert itself, and the syllabus can be made more continuous by grouping it around a series of striking Biblical figures. Special place should be given to the Gospel history. In his little book on "The Junior Department,"* Mr. Archibald gives and rightly commends a syllabus drawn out by Pease in his "Outline of a Bible School Curriculum." But speaking generally, the International Lesson, if only the personal interest is carefully emphasised, should not prove ill adapted for this period. It is probable that the purely didactic lessons are lost on the average child during the period between eight and thirteen years; and it is far better to influence and form the child's mental atmosphere during this time by means of more concrete historical material. The biographical interest will naturally merge before long into an interest in more general history; but the wise teacher who studies his pupils will probably be

* p. 41.

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able gradually to broaden the stage so as to correspond to their expanding interests.

The internal organisation of the two departments will follow the general lines of the Primary; and the same scheme of officers will be required. The devotional part of the session should, of course, run on more mature lines, and a certain liturgical element may be profitably admitted, in the form of common repetition of the Lord's Prayer and the Commandments, and responsive readings of the Beatitudes and certain Psalms. The piano should be used in the same way as in the Primary Department, but the amount of marching will necessarily be much less. But it is always safe to assume that wherever the piano can be suitably used it should be used, if only because it is the simplest means for preventing unnecessary noise and disorder.

The introduction of manual work into the Primary Department must be followed up during this stage. The work done in this way will necessarily be of a more serious character than that of the younger children. At the present time, the real difficulty in the way of manual work during this period is the inadequate supply of teachers who would be able to direct it. The day will come when the Primary

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Department will have raised a generation of teachers versed in this kind of work. In the meantime we are handicapped by the fact that comparatively few of our teachers have had the opportunity of acquainting themselves with manual work.

To emphasise the need of manual work and its place in the curriculum of the junior stage is, I fear, to legislate too far ahead. But there can be no doubt that it will come. In America the idea, if not the practice, is already almost a commonplace, and there are English schools that are rapidly becoming ripe for it.

But what manual work is there that can be undertaken with advantage at this stage? It will be recognised that during this period the children will want to do something more nearly related to reality than the make-believe sand pictures of the Primary Department. Apart from the work of writing answers to questions and short essays, the following methods are used to great profit in some American schools :—

(a) *Map drawing*, either on the flat, or in relief by means of sand or pulp. Desks or tables will be necessary for the former; and for the latter a large sand table on which the various classes could take turns in the construction of relief maps.

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(b) *Filling in and colouring blank outline maps*, for the purpose of tracing out journeys, locating events, or marking political boundaries.

(c) *Scrap-book making*—scraps and pictures pasted in books in illustration of the lesson.

(d) *Modelling*, in clay, wood, or cardboard, such objects as the Temple, houses, sheepfolds, and the like.

Most of the activities shown above would usually occupy a longer time than an ordinary school session can afford to give, and it is wise to encourage the scholars to do as much as possible of their "lesson expression" at home. They should be encouraged to make or collect and bring such objects as may be of permanent illustrative use and may be preserved in the school museum.

It is only necessary to add that in these two departments the classes should be as small as they can conveniently be made. At the same time, a good deal will depend upon the capacity of the teacher. It is not wise to have a cut-and-dried system of class dimensions. But the gain of small classes is beyond question. To begin with, the children receive more individual attention; and it is easier, in the second place, to keep order in a small class, and so to secure order in the schoolroom. If

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the arrangement of the room is carried out on lines analogous to those of the Primary Department it will, of course, be possible to break up the mass of the children into classes in the same way. I fear, however, that the time has not come when our congregational "powers that be" are sufficiently convinced of the desirability of this work to secure proper accommodation for full grading.

It might, perhaps, be pointed out here that in the Sunday school building of the future it will not be considered essential to have a very large number of small classrooms. The central fact for the architect of the new school house for a school, say, of 350 children will be the necessity of having three or four large rooms each with an easy capacity for 75 to 100 children. Whatever is added to this by way of supplementary rooms will be all to the good. This will necessarily limit the statistical dimensions of the school; but this will be no great evil. Most town schools are, as it is, too much overcrowded to do effective work; and the time is surely ripe when we should set our faces in the direction of getting the best work done in the interest of a given number of children rather than seek after fat statistical returns. In the day schools, the number of

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school places is always fixed; and if the Sunday school is to provide the physical and other educational conditions necessary to good work, it must resort to the same expedient.

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IN the scheme of grading outlined on pages 57 and 58, the adolescent stage is divided into two parts, the one being composed of boys and the other of girls. The reason for this division is that the period of early adolescence has an anti-sexual character; and boys and girls at this stage are never at their best unless they are apart. This feeling wears off in a year or two, but in the meantime it should be respected.

The other marked characteristic of this period is the strong gregarious tendency—the instinct which makes girls and boys, especially boys, form themselves into groups and gangs. This indicates the desirability of large classes at this stage, and probably the ideal arrangement is that of classes of twenty to thirty boys. In such classes there will be room for two or three gangs; and it is far better than that there should be a distribution of the gangs over a large number of small classes. And it has the additional value of helping to broaden

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the social outlook. In a school, say, of 350 children there will probably be one boys' and one girls' class of about these dimensions.

The critical character of this period, from the point of view of spiritual results, has already been emphasised. This is the time at which we are likely to find a certain sensitiveness to religious impressions, which properly controlled and treated may lead to a definite avowal of Christian faith. It is, therefore, the point at which the evangelistic function of the Sunday school comes to a head.

It is a mistake to suppose, however, that this evangelistic office is to be discharged by persistent direct appeals. It is not even to be done by setting apart a special day. The institution of "Decision Day" seems to me of more than doubtful utility. In any case the attempt to produce decision in a stated and deliberate way before the period of early adolescence cannot be right, and there can be no manner of doubt whatsoever that it is altogether wrong to impose a "Decision Day" upon the whole school. Even in the Senior Departments a special "Decision Day" is not without very serious danger. The peculiar temper of the young person at this stage makes any emotion very contagious; and what

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looks to the gratified teacher like a revival among his boys may turn out in the end to be no more than the passing of an emotional wave which has had no real spiritual content and which may conceivably leave behind it very disastrous results. The true work of leading to decision must be done personally.

It will be evident at once that great circumspection is necessary in the choice of superintendents for these departments. They must be persons who realise that it falls to them to harvest the results of all the work of the lower departments by leading the scholars to definite spiritual issues. For this they must possess endless tact and wisdom. They will need to watch the young people in their charge closely and patiently, to diagnose their spiritual state and to apply the appropriate stimuli to bring them into a ripe condition for making the right life choice. There must be much tender and gentle personal dealing. It is impossible to lay too much stress upon the need of constant personal intercourse of a private character between the superintendent and the scholars. It is there that the most momentous part of the work will be done.

The staple of the class teaching will be the story of the great heroes and heroines of the

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Bible and of Christian history, and supremely, of course, the life of Jesus. The kind of heroism which appeals to boys in this period is that which manifests great physical strength and courage. It will be necessary to exercise care that due prominence is given to the rarer and finer heroism of the moral and spiritual life. This the wise teacher will not be unmindful of. Boys are not by any means insensible to the higher and less spectacular kinds of heroism. Only a little time ago I asked a company of boys to name the man they admired most, and I was very gratified to have as one answer the name of Dr. Hall Edwards, of Birmingham, who had shortly before been brought into honourable public notice on account of his loss of both hands as the result of his work with the Röntgen rays. When you have boys who will respond to that kind of heroism, you have the most hopeful material in the world for making good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

I think it will always be necessary to allow superintendents of these departments considerable latitude in the selection of lesson material. This may not conduce to conspicuous examination records; but it is indispensable to the superintendent if he is

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to achieve the deeper result. It is possible to lay too much stress upon the work of examination. At best, the examination is of doubtful value from the pædagogical standpoint; and though under the right conditions it may be a good test of Scriptural instruction, and may be so far useful, yet there is a danger lest too much devotion to it may cause the deeper business of religious education to be neglected. The superintendent knows what is expected of him, and he should be allowed to seek his results along the lines which he considers best, provided he is not a crank with private theories of his own, in which case of course he ought never to have become a superintendent at all. Here, surely, of all places a man should most clearly recognise the infinite variety and elasticity of the divine method of bringing souls into light and life eternal. He should be quick to detect the proper line of approach for each of his pupils and know the proper stimulus to apply. As the atmosphere of the class is of supreme importance, he should be largely free to select his lesson material. In any case, this ought to follow some more or less definite scheme, as little is to be expected from a haphazard choice of heterogeneous lessons. Speaking generally,

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the International Lesson scheme is a satisfactory ground-work for the teaching in the Senior Department, but it should be always largely illustrated by relevant biographical material drawn from other sources. In any case, no scheme of lessons should be so rigorously imposed upon the superintendent that he is likely to be hampered in the proper development of the life of the department.

It is not enough that these Senior Departments should meet only as classes once a week. The social instinct is very vigorous and should be allowed to express itself under the most favourable conditions for spiritual and moral development. I think that if there is value in the policy of making the Church the centre of all the young person's interests outside his home (and I think that there is great value in it) this is the time to inaugurate it. The boys should be organised into a little commonwealth with responsible officers. It may, indeed, be desirable that the offices of secretary and treasurer for the department should be discharged—under the supervision of the superintendent—by some of the scholars themselves. Additional offices might be created—monitorships for various things, and the like—for nothing helps to develop the

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personal qualities of young people more than a little sense of responsibility.

This commonwealth should have week-night meetings for purposes of recreation and, where that is possible, of mental improvement. It will be useful to let the boys appoint a committee for the management of their club organisation—always, of course, acting under the supervision of some older persons, preferably the superintendent. Games should be provided, and the boys' committee should be made responsible for the care and good condition of the game materials. A gymnasium is desirable where it is practicable. This is the time when the boy takes a great interest in his muscles, and, if it can be carried out under proper control, boxing is one of the very best means of keeping boys together. Of outdoor games, football, cricket and swimming are generally possible and should be encouraged.

It serves an exceedingly useful purpose to have in the club-room a carpenter's bench or a lathe. It should never be very difficult to find somebody competent to teach the lads the simpler uses of carpenter's tools and the interesting possibilities of the lathe. Wood-carving, fret-work, wire-work, and other useful hobbies should be encouraged wherever they

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are possible. Whether it becomes ultimately profitable or not, no life loses by the possession of some useful interest of this kind. In one school with which I am acquainted there is an annual exhibition of work done in this way, either at home or in the club; and I am told that as an asset to the Sunday school this function is invaluable.

It may be argued that it is no part of the Church's business to provide this kind of thing, particularly the athletics. It is certainly part of the Church's business to help boys to realise the precise place that athletics should have in their life. I fail to see how the Church is to do this unless the athletics are directly under its oversight. Of course, it is to be expected that boys will become for a time inordinately enthusiastic about football or some other form of physical activity; but if there is a wise and reasonable insistence upon the primacy of the serious business of life, they will gradually come to realise that their athletics are subordinate things, the mere servants of the real end of life. I think it is necessary that the boys should be expected to pay some portion at least of the cost of their recreation, if only in order to preserve and cultivate the spirit of independence and to avoid any danger of the

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Church being regarded as an agency for the provision of free amusements. It will depend, in the end, upon the superintendent which interest becomes supreme; and if he is the proper man, the boys will sooner or later learn the lesson that their amusements and athletics are intended solely to give them fresh minds and strong bodies for the business of life and the service of Christ.

It is very usual with boys of this period to organise them into *quasi*-military or similar groups. Two organisations of this kind work among boys—the Boys' Brigade and the Boys' Life Brigade. The former has its Anglican and Roman Catholic counterparts. It is sometimes urged against the Boys' Brigade that it tends to foster militarism. I have some years' experience of one of the oldest London companies, and I have had other opportunities of seeing the work at close quarters; and I am free to state that there is not the slightest ground for supposing that the Boys' Brigade does induce a military spirit. It must not be forgotten that there are reasons why at this period the soldier appeals strongly to the boy; and the Boys' Brigade simply utilises this instinct for a higher purpose. So far as I can see, the sole point of essential distinction

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between the Boys' Brigade and the Boys' Life Brigade is the fact that some of the companies of the former use dummy rifles for certain exercises. For the rest, the drill, the gymnastics, the ambulance and life-saving work run much on the same lines. Of the Boy Scouts movement initiated by General Baden-Powell I am not in a position to speak, as I have no experience of its working; but it appears that some Sunday school authorities find it compatible with their other work. In any case, when all is said and done, since in the present state of the world we *must* have soldiers and some boys *will* anyhow become soldiers, it is something gained at least if they are beforehand made into soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The peculiar value of these organisations is that they tend to cultivate the habit of swift obedience, amenability to discipline and a good deal of self-respect. The uniform has a great power of suggestibility, and it can hardly be denied that boys who belong to these organisations possess usually a very smart and promising appearance. There is abundant testimony to the moral value of the work thus done. Of course, the Bible class is central to both brigades. It is the pivot on which everything

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hangs. And when the commanding officer is a real boys' man, who himself recognises the primacy of the spiritual office of the brigade, there are few organisations more capable of rendering real and effective service to the kingdom of God.

In connection with these organisations there is usually one institution the value of which, both physical and moral, it is not easy to over-estimate. That is the annual camp. A week's experience of one of these camps is necessary in order to realise how useful they may be in dealing with boys in the matter of the deeper issues of life. The freedom, the *abandon*, the general atmosphere of *bonhomie* and good-will which pervade the camp, make it very easy to lead the boys into an intimacy of intercourse which is often impossible under other conditions. The more this camp movement extends, the better it will be for British manhood on all grounds.

The foregoing discussion has largely occupied itself with boys; for boys constitute the acuter problem at this stage. The girls are on the whole more amenable to the influences of religious education; but it should not be forgotten that great advantages accrue from a somewhat similar treatment of girls in the way

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of clubs and guilds. But there is one important aspect of the work of these departments which affects boys and girls alike.

It will have been seen in the discussion of the Primary Department that part of its work consists in the introduction and training of young people for the work of the Sunday school. The Primary assistants are young people of sixteen years or thereabout who are responsible for small classes of three or four infants. The supply of these assistants should devolve upon the Senior Departments. At the risk of a charge of needless repetition I wish again to emphasise the pædagogical soundness of this procedure. So long as the preparation class is effective there is nothing lost in the way of instruction, whereas for the actual business of bringing the work of religious education to a head there is nothing so useful as the introduction of young people to actual work. It is of the essence of religious education that it should be in large part expressive and practical; and that the Primary Department achieves the desired result is proved by the fact that the assistants, when they have not done so previously, almost invariably make of their own accord the request to be admitted into Church fellowship. It is the case that,

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when the Senior Department has failed to lead up to a definite life choice, the stimulus afforded by the Primary Department rarely fails to complete the process.

This period of life is critical in other ways than those mentioned already, and a word is necessary upon another aspect of the problem of our older boys and girls. As things are to-day, especially in large centres of population, there is about the age of fourteen a very considerable exodus of boys and girls from the elementary schools. Of the girls, the great majority enter domestic service, factories or retail shops. It is probable that the common view that marriage and domesticity constitute the natural destiny of the girl has induced the custom of regarding more or less casual and comparatively unskilled employment as the proper sphere for the majority of girls. This view is, of course, largely justified by the fact that most girls do eventually become wives. But the case of the boys is different. The stringency of the prevailing economic conditions compels a vast host of lads to seek situations as errand boys and the like, at which they can immediately earn a comparatively respectable wage. Much, no doubt, of this is due to the drinking habits of the people which, involving

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as they do a considerable expenditure, demand that the domestic coffers shall be replenished as largely and as early as possible by the earnings of the boys. This is, however, only one of the causes of this unfortunate and disastrous custom. But whatever the causes may be, the boy spends the years when he should be learning a trade or otherwise equipping himself for the serious business of life as an errand boy or a cart boy. In the end, when he can no longer subsist on the errand boy's wage, he is cast upon the labour market as another unit in the army of unskilled workers. But the life of the street, with all its capacity for casualising and demoralising the boy's habits, has done grave and lasting injury even before he has arrived at that stage.

It is not within our present purpose to discuss the causes and the remedies of this state of things. It should at least make every Sunday school teacher an eager partisan of the movement for raising the compulsory limit of school age to sixteen years. There are one or two ways, however, in which the Sunday school can help in some degree to check the demoralisation incidental to the present conditions.

First of all, it should throw its entire weight

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into the business of encouraging the lad to attend continuation schools, especially those where the education is of a technical character. It might even go so far as to offer inducements to the scholars to join such schools and reward those of them who acquit themselves respectably in attendance and progress.

Secondly, whether it be practicable or not to follow the first suggestion, the influence of the street must be counteracted by an emphasis in the boys' clubs upon the serious aspects of life. There should be a good library and reading-room, accessible as often as possible to the boys ; and serious discussion of topical and general subjects should be initiated and encouraged. If we cannot teach the boy a trade, we may, perhaps, do a little to make him a good and intelligent citizen and to make him dissatisfied with the outlook of casual and unskilled employment which, as things are, the future too often holds out to him.

It may be possible in some cases for the Sunday school to set up as a branch of its work an organised endeavour to have boys apprenticed where the parents are willing to sacrifice the few weekly shillings to the lad's future. But the system of apprenticeship is apparently, save in a few trades, declining, and

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technical education is becoming more and more the gateway into skilled employment. The Education Committee of the London County Council offer, in connection with continuation schools, classes on the premises of boys' clubs and the like; and many a boy, who might not be willing to attend continuation schools, might be induced to devote an hour nightly out of his club time to the serious business of learning something useful. But the Sunday school, with the best will in the world, can do comparatively little in this matter. The economic conditions, which have caused this paradoxical juxtaposition in our national life of acute over-employment and chronic under-employment, with all the heavy toll thereby exacted from the young life of the land, need drastic overhauling; and little can be done to counteract the demoralisation of the boy until the entire economic situation is revised. At the same time it must be remembered that to induce in a boy a strong Christian character is to equip him with the wherewithal to overcome much of the evil influence that inevitably surrounds him in the social organisation of our time. But it requires a strong Christian character indeed to survive without injury the stringency, the uncertainty, and the

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privation which constantly attend the life of a great proportion of the people of this country to-day.

This section would be incomplete without a reference to another important element in the treatment of boys and girls at this stage. At its beginning it is markedly anti-sexual; but as it proceeds there is a gradual awakening of the sexual instinct, a recognition of new and strange possibilities. Because parents are either cowardly or negligent, the knowledge of the meaning of these things usually comes along bye-paths of dirty suggestion; and the moral damage that ensues is beyond reckoning. Moral cleanliness depends greatly upon proper knowledge of sexual responsibilities; and if parents would only be wise enough to take their children into their confidence about these things, they would probably save themselves a great deal of anxiety and their children a great deal of trouble, if not even serious and permanent injury. But if parents will not or cannot do it, then the next person in order of fitness and responsibility is the Sunday school teacher—in our scheme the superintendent of the Senior Department. This is delicate work, to be done privately and very quietly. But it should be done. How

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many of us there are to-day who would be grateful had someone been wise enough and brave enough to tell us these things long ago, and we had not been left to discover them in doubtful ways ! It is sometimes, perhaps, best to do this work by giving the boys and girls appropriate books to read upon the subject ; and we are fortunate to-day in that it is possible to find books that are perfectly safe and wholesome and may be recommended without misgiving for reading by our boys and girls.*

* The titles of some of these books will be found in the last chapter.

XI

AFTER SCHOOL DAYS

ACCORDING to the scheme which we follow in this discussion, school days, strictly speaking, come to an end at sixteen years. There can be no doubt that, so far as the majority of the scholars are concerned, the battle is lost or won by the time we arrive at this point. It will, therefore, be necessary to provide means by which we can (*a*) retain those scholars who are still doubtful, and (*b*) confirm and develop the Christian life of those whose retention is already secured.

The idea of the Institutional Church has taken deep root in this country. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that there is room for two kinds of Institutional Churches.

In the central parts of our large towns and cities there are large floating masses of young men and women, drawn thither by the mysterious centripetal attraction which seems to operate in populous places. They have come from other towns and country districts, and a

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very large proportion have come without any pre-arranged attachment to a Church. The problem which is presented by these circumstances is most readily solved by such enterprises as those of Mr. Horne at Whitefield's, and Mr. Phillips at Bloomsbury, in London. The Church becomes a focus around which the whole range of a young person's interests may gather; and since this focus is avowedly and actively Christian and religious, it enables young men and women to spend their leisure time in a religious atmosphere and in the right kind of company.

This problem of the floating youth of our towns is also the problem of the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations. Of the latter it is difficult to exaggerate the value. Its broad and liberal outlook enables it to cover far more ground and to cover it far more effectively than the kindred association for young men. Its consistent policy of linking itself up with the Churches through the Young Women's Bible Classes, together with a system of referees and transfers carried out with great thoroughness, render its work invaluable not only to the young women, but to the Churches. So much cannot be said for the Young Men's Christian

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Association. For good or evil it seems to have associated itself in religious standpoint with a conservative and rigid type of evangelicalism, from which educated young men are inevitably alienated, and it thereby limits its opportunities of service very seriously. The natural tendency of the local branches of the Association is to become restricted and isolated organisations which exert no very general influence upon the average Christian young man, because their atmosphere has so very little attraction for him. I know that there are many cases which do not come under this criticism; but most branches do. And so long as the headquarters' authorities refuse to recognise any other interpretation of evangelical truth than that which the Evangelical Alliance endorses, so long will the association impose upon itself a very grave limitation.

But perhaps the weakest spot in the Young Men's Christian Association (the Young Women's Association by its intimate relationship with the Churches obviates this weakness) is, that it makes little or no provision for the fact that sooner or later young men and women are bound to desire each other's company. It is good for both in every way that they should. One great reason for the success of the

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Institutional Church is that it makes no sexual distinctions. Young men and women meet within its walls on equal terms, save only of course in those rooms which are exclusively (and rightly), reserved for either, and it is difficult to imagine any conditions (except those of the home) under which it is more desirable for large bodies of young men and women to meet. And since these young men and women are mostly away from home, and are at that peculiarly sensitive period when they begin to contemplate setting up homes of their own, they stand a far better chance of discovering the proper "other party" under such conditions as these. In this respect alone the contribution of the Institutional Church to the social well-being of this country is no mean one.

But this type of Institutional Church does a special work under special circumstances. In other places the problem must be approached from another point of view. There are a great many Churches, *e.g.*, those in suburban neighbourhoods, in which the home life of the members is of such a character as to obviate the necessity of any provision for its young men and women beyond the Bible class, the Christian Endeavour and the literary societies.

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But the Churches that are situated in districts where there is little or no opportunity for such a home life are bound to make some contribution to supply the lack. What such Churches have to face is the fact that a large proportion of their young men and women will tend to spend their evenings in walking about the streets exposed to endless temptations, unless some provision is made for them otherwise. The solution of this problem is the Institute. For whether it be the retention of those scholars who have passed out of the school without giving indication of having definitely embraced the Christian life or the safeguarding of those who have done so that is aimed at, it can hardly be questioned that it is a desirable thing to provide the means whereby they can spend their leisure time in an atmosphere of religious culture.

It is sometimes objected that the Institute tends to draw young people away from their homes. The criticism is made in ignorance of the situation. There are very few Churches, at least in London, which are not in proximity to large areas where, by reason of high rents and consequent over-crowding, home life can scarcely be said to exist at all. And there are, alas! large numbers of young people of whom it may be said with certainty that the less time

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they spend at home the better it is for them. In addition to these, there will also be a considerable body in every district of young people in lodgings and business houses whom the central Churches do not attract and cannot provide for. It is the case of such as these which the Institute meets.

Now, there are two points of view from which the Institute may be regarded. It may be set up as a means of attracting young people from the outside in the hope of inducing them to attend church and ultimately of leading them to Christ. The intention is beyond criticism. But in actual practice this method does not and will not work. Young men will doubtless be drawn into the billiard-room, but it is not easy to lead them through the door of the billiard-room into the church. From the very nature of the plan it is fore-doomed to failure. In the end it resolves itself into a specious form of religious bribery; and a Christian life is not likely to be awakened on these terms. It is true that a number of young men may be kept out of public-houses, but that is not sufficient. Good as that may be, it is not good enough for the Christian Church. This argument is virtually a confession of

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failure to realise the first and larger intention. It was intended to draw these young men to Christ, and when the project has failed we justify it by pleading a minor success. The plan fails because it is a reversal of the proper order. Instead of working from the centre outward, it has sought to work from the circumference inward.

It may be set down as the first principle of the Institute that its activities should have an avowedly religious core. This means that the Bible class is central to it. The membership of the Institute should be the privilege of the members of the Bible class or of some institution which may be regarded as equivalent. In actual practice the qualification for membership will include:—

1. Membership of the Bible class ;
2. Membership of the Church ;
3. Seat-holding in the church ;
4. Membership of the Christian Endeavour or some analogous society ;
5. Office-bearing in the Sunday school, Boys' Brigade, etc.

The Institute will in this way have a central religious nexus to begin with.

Before I touch upon the subordinate activities of the Institute, a word should be said

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concerning the organisations from which its membership is drawn.

The Bible classes for young men and women depend, for their popularity and success, upon their leaders. Their importance cannot be exaggerated and no Church organisation can be regarded as complete which does not possess them. It is most desirable that our young men should obtain systematic acquaintance with the Scriptures ; and nowadays most of the Churches make very adequate provision for Bible classes in the way of syllabus and outline study. But here, as elsewhere, the spiritual interest must be predominant, and the leader will be eager to reap such a harvest of decision and conversion as his class has it in it to provide.

It is generally recognised that the best thing for a young Christian is to give him some work to do, and if he is not at once brought under the yoke, his spiritual life will be impoverished seriously at the start, and the will and capacity for service may perhaps never be restored. It is in its emphasis upon the need of service that the value of the Christian Endeavour movement has lain. Its success has been phenomenal, and though one has of late years not been without some misgivings concerning

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its future, it is refreshing to understand that its leaders have every confidence in its vitality. So long as it is kept under proper supervision by the right people and not permitted to develop a sense of independence of and detachment from the main life of the Church, there seems to be no reason why it should not fill a permanent place in the economy of Church life. I should personally prefer a less stringent pledge of membership. I cannot think it good that participation in the meeting should be obligatory on every member present. Some say, of course, that this is central, and essential to the life of the society. Frankly, I do not believe it, and my unbelief arises from the fact that the most thriving thing I know at the moment is a young people's society which is in every respect except the pledge analogous to the Christian Endeavour Society.

The idea of discovering and doing work by means of different committees is really the strong point in organisations of this kind. A sense of real responsibility makes a strong appeal to young men and women, and they rejoice in the opportunity of doing something which has actual use and worth. And for the confirmation and development of the Christian life, this is the very best thing possible.

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I cannot conceive of any complete organisation of young people's work which does not contain some provision of this kind. For the young people who pass out of the Sunday school, there is need of an institution to which they may attach themselves, in which they may find fellowship in the Christian life and through which they may serve an apprenticeship for the wider and more severe responsibilities of Church affairs. It is in a real sense the crown and climax of the organisations for the young, the channel by which they pass into useful and effective Church membership, the training ground for more mature service.

It is necessary that such service as the society undertakes should bring its members into frequent and intimate contact with the main stream of Church life. A certain number of its members should be on duty at every public service of the Church to greet and welcome young men and women visitors, so far as that rather delicate task can be done. It is my own custom on the first Sunday night of the month to have the members of the Young People's Guild to act as vestibule and pew stewards, to take the collection and to read the lesson; and there can be no question as to the good effects of this plan. At the close of

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the service they arrange and hold a social gathering to which all young people present are invited. This direct service of the Church itself is invaluable to those who do it, as it serves as an excellent introduction to the larger responsibilities to come.

The other alternative qualifications I need not dwell upon. It will be seen that the aim of the Institute thus conceived is to provide for *the young people that we already have*. The religious interest is central and supreme, and all the other activities are subordinate to this. If it proves attractive to young people from without, well and good. The already established religious basis secures that the Institute will not deteriorate into a mere provision of recreation, and in no case should the definitely religious qualification for membership be relaxed. All candidates for membership must connect themselves with the Church, the Bible class or the Young People's Society. What it does for the young people whom we already have is to keep the range of their interests within an atmosphere of religion; and it is not an unworthy ideal for the Church, where the home cannot be relied upon to do its part, to be the centre around which the entire life of its young people revolves.

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It will be one very important part of the work of the Institute to lie in wait for the older scholars as they pass out of the Sunday school; and to this end it must be in close touch with the leaders and officers of the Senior Boys' and Girls' Departments. A junior Christian Endeavour Society or Guild of Service may fitly be one of its adjuncts. But it should also, by opening to the elder scholars its religious and literary meetings on suitable occasions, and its reading and recreation rooms on one or two evenings a week, habituate them to the atmosphere of the Institute, and introduce them to those whose fellow members they will become. This part of the work should be the responsibility of a separate committee.

What the supplementary activities of the Institute will be will naturally depend upon the members themselves. Any legitimate interest which may serve as a rallying point may be organised into a department of the Institute. Some things, however, are more essential than others. There should be a reading-room and a recreation-room open every evening, and a gymnasium evening is a very desirable element in the scheme. This, of course, depends upon the accommodation available, but in those fortunate cases where

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there is such a provision for the older boys it is usually possible to extend it to the young men, and perhaps the young women also.

The recreation-room starts a great many questions. What games shall be permitted and what tabooed? Shall there be a billiard-table? I do not propose to embark upon this controversy. Personally I think the advantages of the billiard-table largely outweigh any substantial objections that may be urged against it. In any case the selection of games may usually be left quite safely to the judgment of the Institute itself.

It is, however, greatly to be desired that the reading-room should be made attractive enough to prove a serious rival to the recreation-room. This will necessitate a good library and a supply of periodicals (which can usually be secured from friends in the Church).

A Literary Society will naturally be a part of the Institute organisation. This is the only opportunity for secular culture which many of our young men and women have; and it is exceedingly useful for education in the responsibilities of national and municipal citizenship. It may become, when properly managed, a real training ground for civic service. Its value in widening the outlook of

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young people is beyond question. It needs scarcely to be added that persons of superior education should be pressed into the service of direction and oversight in this department.

Beyond these activities football, cricket, tennis, cycling, swimming, rambling, photographic and musical clubs and groups can very profitably be formed if there is sufficient material available. Frequent social gatherings will help to preserve the unity and enthusiasm of the Institute.

With the business end of the Institute and its apparatus of committees and officers I need hardly deal. The Institute should be autonomous, responsible directly to the congregational executive or whatever body may be in direct charge of the young people's work. Self-government induces initiative and self-help. It is, of course, desirable that the Institute should as far as possible be financially self-supporting.

But once more let me emphasise that, unless the core is and is kept soundly and strongly religious in tone, the Institute will become merely a provision of cheap recreation and cheap athletics. This is neither the function of the Institute nor the business of the Church. It seems to me that to safeguard the spiritual

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intention of the Institute it is necessary that the minister or some person whom he can absolutely trust should be at the very heart of the Institute, presiding at its meetings and setting the right key for the management of its affairs. Experience shows that, unless the spiritual centre is safeguarded in this or some similar way, the Institute tends to drift away out of all essential and vital relationship with the entire organisation of which it should form so important and indispensable a part.

XII

THE TRAINING OF THE TEACHER

It need hardly be argued that in the end the success or failure of religious education depends not on any apparatus of grading so much as upon the personal qualities of the people who are concerned in it. Unless the staffing of the Sunday school is attended to with as much anxious care as the organisation, we shall be no better off for all the improvement we may make in the latter.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider in some detail the problem of the teacher. It goes without saying that the first desideratum in the teacher is "a wholesome and winning personality, a personality that actually lives in the realities of the Christian experience." It is absolutely essential that no teacher should be appointed who does not give indisputable evidence of Christian character. It is not essential, at least, in the early stages, that stated Church membership should be enforced as a condition.

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It may also be stated that one of the governing principles of the reformed Sunday school should be that *it shall produce and rear its own teachers*. This does not mean that the service of those who have not passed through the Sunday school and who show some evidence of capacity for the work should be refused; it means simply that the school should provide as a part of its own organisation the necessary machinery for turning out its own teachers, properly equipped, and in sufficient numbers.

But so far as this country is concerned we are very far from having reached a state of things in which this principle can be acted upon to any extent. We need a far more serious view of the Sunday school and its possibilities before we can ever secure the conditions which are necessary to realise it. As matters stand, there is no provision at all in the economy of our corporate Christian life in England for the equipment of men and women for the work of religious education.*

In the June, 1909, number of *Religious Education*, the journal of the Religious Education Association (of America) the two following items of news are recorded:—

* Except, of course, the training centre at Selly Oak, and the school of the Church of England Sunday School Institute at Blackheath.

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Mr. H. F. Evans, of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, goes to the Second Baptist Church of St. Louis to be director of educational work and assistant to the pastor.

Rev. W. H. Boocock, Ph.D. . . . has accepted the position of Director of Religious Education for the First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, N.Y.

This looks like a return to the early office of the "teacher" in the Church; it certainly is the evidence of a real sense of the possibilities of religious education, and of the responsibility of the Church with reference to it.

This is only one detail of the evidence of the great awakening of American Christendom to the importance of the Sunday school. In this country, the question that immediately rises when teacher training is mooted is, Who is to do it? In America, the answer that is given is that it is part of the function of the ministry. And the matter is not left there. Several American universities give courses in Religious Pædagogogy. Twenty-six denominational seminaries give courses of lectures in the Psychology of Education and the Principles and Methods of Teaching. Eighteen hold classes specially in Religious Pædagogogy and Education; fourteen in the History, Organisation and Management of the Sunday School. In the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, there is actually a Chair of Sunday School Pædagogogy. Other colleges

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offer instruction to Sunday school superintendents and teachers either as part of their regular work or by means of summer schools. And this is only the early stage of a movement which promises to attain considerable dimensions. Perhaps at long last English theological colleges will wake up to a similar need on this side of the Atlantic.

In the meantime, we shall have to be content with crude and amateurish methods of teacher training. Until there is one man in every congregation who understands the business of religious education in a systematic way, we may as well confess that we shall not get beyond the stage of playing with this great pressing problem.

The coming of the Primary Department has certainly opened the way to better things. By introducing the older scholars to the actual service of the Sunday school it is creating a source from which there should in time come a regular supply of at least partially trained teachers.

It is, however, obvious that the training which the Primary preparation class affords can scarcely be regarded as adequate for the more severe work of the upper departments. What we may expect the teacher to gain at

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this stage beside the general instruction in the Scriptures which the class should provide is the capacity for simple, orderly and lucid presentation of the lesson material. This is a very valuable element in a teacher's equipment throughout his whole career. It has induced a methodical habit of dealing with the lesson which will help the teacher incalculably in facing the tougher and more complex matter which the later departments have to handle.

Mr. Archibald advocates that in the Junior Department there should be a class of the same character to follow up the work of the Primary Department. The work of this class will consist of general Bible study and lesson preparation; and the same regulation will apply to teachers who are absent from the class, namely, that they shall not be permitted to teach the lesson on the following Sunday.

I am inclined, however, to think that teacher training outside the Primary Department will have to be conceived on broader lines than these, especially under the circumstances in which we find ourselves to-day. If Mr. Archibald means that the teachers of the Junior Department are to be drawn directly from the same class and period as those of the Primary Department, then a special training class for

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this department is essential. But surely we have a right to expect that the teachers of the Primary will in time pass into the Junior Department, and when they have arrived at that stage, they will be ready for a more severe and radical course of training.

It should be understood that all the suggestions in the direction of teacher training which are made here are regarded frankly as provisional only, and that the Sunday school cannot be regarded as complete until it has its own properly organised machinery for the upbringing and equipping of teachers. That is the goal. Meantime we must do our best.

In American schools there is frequently a class of older scholars which meets at the same time as the rest of the school for preparation for the work of teaching; and expert opinion seems inclined to regard this as the ideal arrangement. This is called the normal class. If there is material for a normal class, that is, if there are senior scholars who are deemed unfit for the work of the Primary Department, or who are found to be incapable of dealing with very young children, but who nevertheless, desire to be fitted for Sunday school work, it is clearly desirable that there should be such a class. But even if there be

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material, there are other not inconsiderable difficulties in the way—and usually the supreme and fatal difficulty of finding a capable leader for the class.

It will be found in practice that the real business of teacher training will have to be carried on during the week. But one thing should—save only under exceptional circumstances—be severely and rigorously ruled out of its proceedings. That is the preparation of the next Sunday's lesson. It is perhaps due to the lack of teacher training in the past that Sunday school teachers have come so universally to depend upon lesson helps of various kinds. Our Sunday school authorities should very seriously face the question of the perfectly demoralising superabundance of lesson helps. A teacher will give a lesson which he has prepared for himself with immensely greater effect than that with which he will give a lesson which has been prepared for him. The undoubted effect of the multiplicity and the completeness of lesson helps is to leave the teacher little to do for himself and to make him increasingly dependent upon them. That this affects the teaching injuriously is beyond demonstration; and the same effects are produced when the teacher training class occupies itself with lesson

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preparation. What is more to the point is, that the teacher should learn to prepare the lesson for himself.

It is perhaps too much, in the present stage of the Sunday School Reform movement, to insist upon such a complete curriculum as would constitute real and thorough teacher training.* It, should, however, be kept steadily in view that satisfactory teacher training should include:—

- (a) General introduction to the Scriptures.
- (b) Child study, with special reference to religious development.
- (c) The principles and practice of teaching, with special reference to the work of the Sunday school.

* The conference of the Committee on Education in connection with the American International Sunday School Association meeting in January, 1908, defines the minimum requirements for a standard course of teacher training as follows:—

(a) That such minimum should include fifty lesson periods of which at least twenty should be devoted to the study of the Bible, and at least seven each to the study of the Pupil, the Teacher, and the Sunday School.

(b) That two years' time should be devoted to this course, and in no case should a diploma be granted for its completion in less than a year.

(c) That there should be an Advanced Course including not less than one hundred lesson periods, with a minimum of forty lesson periods devoted to the study of the Bible, and of not less than ten each to the study of the Pupil, the Teacher, the Sunday School, and Church History, Missions or kindred themes.

(d) That three years' time should be devoted to this course, and in no case should a diploma be granted for its completion in less than two years.

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It is obvious that a curriculum of this sort cannot at present be carried through in effective fashion in single schools. Some method of grouping should be resorted to. It is generally found in practice that large central classes are unsatisfactory. The large area from which they are drawn seems to militate against real cohesion. My own experience of teacher training classes leads me to the conclusion that the best results are obtained by grouping a few neighbouring schools belonging to the same denomination. The common denominational interest adds an element of cohesion which would otherwise be lacking. I do not go so far as to say that the denominational nexus is indispensable. In small communities it is probably unnecessary. It might be a useful suggestion to Free Church Councils that they should, in association with local Sunday School Unions, institute a training class within their own areas.

Failing some arrangement such as this (and in the case of country schools it is out of the question), a useful plan is to start a class composed of the teachers of one school, and to work through some simple text-book. The minister, or possibly the superintendent, might lead the class. It is probable that in most

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cases neither will have had any antecedent training to fit them particularly for the task, but that should be no insuperable objection. One minister at least may testify to his own indebtedness to such a class, in which he started almost on equal terms with the youngest teacher in it (save only for a scrappy memory of a college course in psychology), and worked with the teachers of his school through Professor John Adams' little "Primer on Teaching." It is an experiment which is at least worth trying. An alternative to this text-book (which is in some parts rather difficult for the average Sunday school teacher) may be found in the simpler, but more comprehensive course published by certain American Sunday school authorities—for example, the standard course published by the *Sunday School Times*, of Philadelphia, under the title, "Training the Teacher," in which outlines are given of a first year study of the Bible, the child, teaching principles, and Sunday school methods. But wherever a "grouped" class is possible, it is far better. To begin with, the ministers can be pressed into the service of the class for courses in Bible study; and it were extraordinary indeed if within any group of churches there could not be found

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one or more trained school teachers who would be willing to take, and capable of taking, a class in elementary psychology and teaching method. Anyone who has had a course of training in psychology can in a short time, and with little difficulty, master the ground which a first year's course in child study would cover.

One class was found to work very well in this way. Four courses were arranged:—

1. Old Testament.
2. New Testament.
3. Child Study.
4. Teaching Method.

In this case the three first courses were taken by ministers, the fourth by a trained teacher. The session was divided into two terms. In the first term the courses in New Testament and Child Study were taken. In the second, the other two courses.

The class met at 8.15 on a Friday evening. A quarter of an hour was allowed for opening and closing exercises, the calling of the roll and any other necessary business. Half an hour was allotted to each subject, so that the class was usually over by 9.30.

An examination was held at the close of the session, with such gratifying results that a

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second year's course is now in preparation. In this course probably two subjects only will be taken—Elementary Psychology with particular reference to the development of the religious consciousness, and a detailed study of some book of the Bible with a view to teaching the principles of Scriptural exegesis so far as they can be applied to the English Bible.

The success of a scheme of this kind depends upon two factors—first of all, the recognition on the part of the teachers of the need of training; and second, the availability of efficient leaders. I think that there are signs that the teachers are being awakened to the need of training. After all, the case for trained Sunday school teachers is the same as the case for trained ministers. Minister and teacher are engaged in the same work and seeking the same end. Why should we demand special training in the one case and think it superfluous in the other? The time is coming when we shall demand a standard of capability and efficiency in the teacher as naturally as we demand it now of the minister.

It may be answered that there is no likelihood of this so long as the service of the Sunday school is voluntary. The sufficient

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answer to this is that we may look to the Christian spirit and the increased recognition of the dignity and honour of the Sunday school service to supply a sufficient impulse to our young people to move them to seek the necessary fitness for the work. Many are already seeking it; and this is the promise of better things to come.

One very desirable thing, and it is certainly not difficult to get, is a small library for the teachers of the school. This should include books on psychology and child study, on Sunday school organisation and teaching principles, and provision should be made for aids to Bible study in the form of Bible dictionaries and handbooks. The bibliography at the end of this book will furnish an idea of the literature that is available. Perhaps the most effective step towards the general institution of Sunday school teachers' libraries would be to follow the example of the Friends' First Day School Association and establish a loan library at the denominational headquarters.

This chapter may fitly conclude with an appeal to those teachers who have already received a superior education to take the lead in the formation of these classes. There is still so considerable a survival of the baneful

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superstition that the work of the Sunday school needs no special qualification, that it is essential that those who least need the training should, for the sake of the others and the work, be the first to seek it.

NOTE.—The University of London issues a "*Certificate in Religious Knowledge*" which, while it has no special connection with Sunday school work, may afford many teachers of superior education an opportunity of proving their zeal and capacity for their Sunday school work. The examination is fairly stiff, but it is not beyond many Sunday school teachers within my knowledge. It is held annually in January, and may be taken as a whole or in two parts. Six subjects, four compulsory and two optional, must be presented, either all at once or in two equal parts. The compulsory subjects are:—

(a) Old Testament—Introduction and subject-matter.

(b) Old Testament—A portion or a subject to be studied in more detail.

(c) New Testament—Introduction and subject-matter.

(d) New Testament—A portion or a subject to be studied in more detail.

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The optional subjects are :—

(*e*) Greek Testament ; (*f*) a period of Church History ; (*g*) History of Christian Doctrine ; (*h*) History of Christian Worship ; (*i*) Christian Ethics ; (*j*) Philosophy of Religion ; (*k*) Comparative Study of Religion.

The detailed syllabus is not quite so formidable in appearance as the above bare list of subjects would suggest. The syllabus may be had from the Registrar of the University Extension Board, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.

XIII

SOME OTHER MATTERS

It is impossible within the limits of this book to deal with all the subjects which bear upon Sunday school work. There are, however, some matters without some recognition of which even the slight pretensions to completeness which this volume makes would be unjustified.

One of these is the *Home Department*, which is a kind of University Extension Movement applied to the Sunday school. Its membership is composed of all those who cannot or will not attend the Sunday school or Institute, but who are prepared to give a weekly half-hour to the study of the lesson.

The first and most important function of the Home Department, from the point of view of this book, is to enlist the sympathy of the homes from which the Sunday school children are drawn, and so to secure that the work which is done at the school shall at least have the moral if not the practical support of the

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parents. But there is more than this in it. It really aims at an extension of Bible study wherever it can find an opening, and if Dr. Forsyth is right in saying that "preaching can only flourish where there is more than a formal respect for the Bible as distinct from the Church, namely, an active respect, an assiduous personal use of it . . ." * it is surely the business of the preacher to see what can be made of the Home Department. Not only are families invited into it, but single individuals, persons in institutions, and all who are for any reason deprived of other opportunity of joining in systematic study of the Scriptures.

The work of this department is carried on by a superintendent, usually a lady, and a staff of visitors. The apparatus and literature necessary for the conduct of the work may be obtained at a cheap rate. The duty of the superintendent consists of the selection and the supervision of the visitors and whatever other business may arise. The visitors are not teachers. It is usually found in practice that members of the Home Department prefer to study the lesson by themselves. In some

* "Positive Preaching and Modern Mind," pp. 7, 8. See the further development of this point, pp. 33 ff.

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cases meetings of groups of members are occasionally held with advantage. The function of the visitors is to see that the members of whom they are in charge are supplied regularly with the necessary literature, and to discharge any and every kind of duty which may fall to an intermediary between the school organisation and its outlying members. In country schools, the Home Department has been found extremely valuable.

In America, the Home Department has become a very popular institution, and there is no reason why it should not take root in this country. There is great need of the revival of Bible study, and many would be glad of an opportunity of guidance in it through the Home Department who may not be prepared to comply with the more exacting conditions of membership in the International Bible Reading Association.

In connection with the Home Department there has arisen a "Messenger Service," into which the older boys are invited to enter. It has, however, been found that this service need not be confined to the Home Department, but may be brought to the use of the whole school. In many cases the Messenger Service has become the postal service of the school. A

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number of blank forms are provided—for example, notes to absent scholars, reminders of special occasions—and when these are filled up it falls to the boys to deliver them and to bring back the replies. They are also entrusted with the collection of Home Department members' contributions, the changing of library books, and indeed with any relevant duty they are capable of performing.

Analogous to the Messenger Service is the Girls' Sunshine Band, the name of which sufficiently indicates its intention.

The provision of wholesome literature for members of the Sunday school was never more pressing than it is to-day. The immense production of cheap low-grade periodicals for boys makes it essential that very earnest attention should be given to the school *library*. It "should contain reference books for Bible study, material for the study of Christian biography, particularly books of missionary experience and adventure, and such wholesome literature as is not otherwise provided for the pupils. Any general literature that is worth reading may properly have a place in the Sunday school library; but the home, the public library, and the Sunday school library will do well to co-operate with one another so

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as to avoid waste. The old-fashioned goody-goody Sunday school book should be excluded as essentially a corrupter because a weakener of character." *

Happily the problem of the Sunday school library is very largely solved for us by the excellent service done by the Sunday School Union through its splendid catalogue of suitable books, and its provision for the supply of these books at a considerable discount and in strong uniform binding.

The question of *Rewards* and *Prizes* is one about which there is considerable diversity of opinion. A reward is defined as given to all who attain a certain standard, while a prize is given only to the two or three who may head a given list. Some admit rewards into the Sunday school scheme, but exclude prizes. Why, I confess I do not quite see. If it is the element of competition that is objectionable, it enters in either case. It would, perhaps, be best if both rewards and prizes could be excluded: But they are not excluded from the day schools, and it would require some explaining to the children why they should be excluded from the Sunday school.

The one thing to be avoided surely is to

* Coe, "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 305.

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make the standard of attainment for prizes and rewards so low as to convert them into baits and bribes. So long as this is not done, there is really no danger. Professor Adams, in a discussion of the question of *Interest*, says, "If a boy learns a lesson in order to gain his teacher's approbation, or to help toward gaining a prize, his interest in the lesson is second hand, as it were, and is known as *Mediate Interest*. If, on the other hand, the boy begins his lesson with the aim of getting a prize, and then gets interested in the lesson itself, he has passed from *Mediate* to *Immediate Interest*. Of the two forms the latter is much better."*

Of this there can be no doubt. But what I wish to point out is, that if so expert an educationist as Professor Adams finds the idea of a prize permissible, it is not likely that there is going to be much harm done by using a prize system of reasonable dimensions as a stimulus in the Sunday school. In any case, I cannot help feeling that the prizeless and rewardless Sunday school of Mr. Archibald and Mr. Henry Cope is at present, at least in our large centres, a counsel of perfection.

For securing regularity and punctuality of attendance there has been produced a large

* "Primer on Teaching," p. 35.

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number of devices during recent years. The "Star Chart" system and the like seem to exercise a powerful stimulus upon the children. There is, however, a danger that over-emphasis upon methods of this kind may lead to an injurious regard for statistical successes. A large average attendance is an excellent thing, but it is not the main thing. And the perpetual danger in the Sunday school is that subordinate things may swamp the essentials.

The question of *examinations* is also one of considerable difficulty. It is, of course, quite clear, that in the results of religious education properly conceived there can be no examination at all in the ordinary sense. But it is certain that occasional examinations in Scriptural knowledge do serve a useful purpose, if not in testing the children, certainly in testing the educational efficiency of the teacher. They give, moreover, a definiteness of aim to the teaching, and help to fix and review the work that has been done.

It need not be argued that in the modern Sunday school *the teaching of missions* will occupy an important place. There can be no doubt that the urgency of the missionary enterprise is being increasingly realised in Protestant Christendom, and it is only natural

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that the Sunday school should be expected to do its share in the creation and nurture of the missionary spirit. Moreover, there is a growing sense abroad of the value of the Sunday school as an evangelistic agency on the mission field itself; and through the linking up of world-wide Sunday school effort by means of the series of successful "World's Sunday School Conventions," the Sunday school is becoming increasingly conscious of its place and importance as a factor in world evangelisation. The Sunday schools of the Presbyterian Church of England have a definite missionary interest in the support of the work on the island of Formosa; and it is impossible to calculate how much of the missionary enthusiasm which is characteristic of that Church arises from its enlistment of its children in definite missionary service through the Sunday schools.

But it is greatly to be desired that there should be more systematic instruction in missions in all our Sunday schools. A definite missionary treatment of such lessons as are capable of it should be given whenever opportunity offers. The atmosphere of the school should be clearly and unmistakably missionary. The propagandist ideal should be carefully emphasised. It should be possible to fit into

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the curriculum of the school a course or courses of mission study, including biography, fields, and other related matter. Special missionary services, the circulation of missionary literature (and there is a perfectly astonishing wealth of good and suitable books on various aspects of missions, some written specially for boys and girls, and a great deal besides quite within their capacity), training in systematic giving to missions—all these things should enter into the normal life of the Sunday school. It should be the ideal of every Sunday school to become a living, burning missionary centre, never forgetting, of course, in its enthusiasm for the wider enterprises of the Church, the opportunity of practical missionary work at its own doors.

XIV

THE LITERATURE OF THE SUBJECT

THE literature bearing upon religious education, Sunday school work and related topics which has been published during recent years is in bulk enormous. This chapter is added in order to guide those who desire to study the matter in greater detail in their choice of books. The following is in no sense to be regarded as a complete list; but it may usefully be taken as a suitable beginning for a teachers' library in so far as it deals with the matters which have been discussed in this book. Books dealing with Bible study are not included—information on this point may be found abundantly elsewhere. An excellent bibliography of the subject, which is much more complete than the one given here, is published by the Friends' First Day School Association (15, Devonshire Street, E.C.).

It will be noticed that the greater part of the following list of books is of American

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origin. This is the result of the great awakening on the other side of the Atlantic to the importance of the Sunday school, and of the newer conception of religious education together with its possibilities for the kingdom of God. Some people may still be contemptuous of "Yankee notions," but no student of this subject will deny that leadership in Sunday school work belongs to-day by right to America.

The books in the following list may be obtained usually of all booksellers. The Sunday School Union Store, in Ludgate Hill, E.C., stocks most of them. Mr. T. F. Downie, of 21, Warwick Lane, E.C., makes a special feature of American Sunday school literature.

I.—RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There can be no question that the most useful work on the general subject of religious education is Professor G. A. Coe's "Education in Religion and Morals" (Revell, 5s.). It is written in clear, unacademic language and covers the ground thoroughly. It is indispensable to those who desire to understand the theoretic basis of Sunday school reform.

The same writer's "The Religion of a Mature Mind" and "The Spiritual Life"

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(Revell, 5s. and 3s. 6d.) are also worth reading as studies in religious psychology. Other useful works are :

Garvie.—"Religious Education." (Sunday School Union, 1s.)

Haslett.—"The Pædagogical Bible School." (Revell, 5s.)

Drawbridge.—"The Training of the Twig." (Longmans, 3s. 3d. ; paper, 6d.)

II.—THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Those who desire some insight into the American point of view cannot do better than read Marion Lawrance's "How to Conduct a Sunday School" (Revell, 4s. 6d.). Marion Lawrance is one of the most successful Sunday school workers in the world, and his book is a mine of valuable suggestion. A more theoretical treatment of the subject may be found in "The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice," by Henry F. Cope (Revell, 3s.).

Mr. G. H. Archibald's "The Sunday School of To-morrow" (Sunday School Union, 1s. 6d.) is short, but valuable by reason of its recognition of Sunday school conditions in England.

No student of Sunday schools can afford to neglect "Our Sunday Schools," a volume published by the Congregational Union (2s.), giving

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the results of an enquiry into the conditions of its Sunday schools.

On the question of *grading*, besides the treatment it receives in works already mentioned, it will be useful to read:—

McKinney.—“The Sunday School Graded: Why? What? How?” (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 5*d.*)

Axtell.—“Grading the Sunday School.” (Westminster Press, 2*s.*)

III.—CHILD STUDY

The standard English work on childhood is Sully's “Studies” (Longmans, 13*s.*). This is, however, far beyond the resources of the average worker. Any of the following works will probably be more useful as well as more accessible:—

Richmond.—“The Mind of a Child.” (Longmans, 3*s.* 6*d.*)

Drummond.—“The Child, His Nature and Nurture.” (Dent, 1*s.*)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman.—“Concerning Children.” (Putnams, 3*s.* 6*d.*)

Elizabeth Harrison.—“A Study of Child Nature.” (Chicago Kindergarten Co., 4*s.* 6*d.*)

Murray.—“From One to Twenty-one.” (Sunday School Union, 1*s.*)

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For the *primary stage*, the following works may be studied :—

Archibald.—“The Power of Play.” (Sunday School Union, 2s. 6d.)

K. D. Wiggin.—“Kindergarten Principles and Practice.” (Gay and Bird, 4s.)

For the special study of the later stages of childhood it will probably be sufficient to read the relevant matter in the works already mentioned. But for *adolescence*, the standard work is Stanley Hall’s two-volume work. This is somewhat expensive as well as too severe for the ordinary student ; and for the practical purposes of the worker its substance may be found in the same writer’s smaller book on “Youth, its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene” (Appleton, 5s.).

For the work of the Sunday school during the primary stage see :—

Ethel Archibald.—“The Primary Department.” (Sunday School Union, 1s. 6d.)

Black. — “Practical Primary Plans.” (Revell, 3s. 6d.)

For the work of the Sunday school after the primary stage, there is a good deal of useful matter in the more general works noticed. But the following may be profitably studied :—

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Archibald. — “The Junior Department.”
(Sunday School Union, 1s. 6d.)

McKinney.—“After the Primary, What?”
(Revell, 2s. 6d.)

Reference was made in Chapter X. to literature bearing upon the question of sexual responsibility. The works of Dr. Stall in the “Self and Sex” series are the best I know. They are rather expensive (4s. each), but they may safely be put into the hands of boys and girls. They are issued in graded volumes under the title of “What a Young Boy (or girl, or young man, etc.) Ought to Know.”

On the question of employment for the older boys and girls (see pp. 118 ff), much valuable information may be found in “Trades for London Boys” and “Trades for London Girls” (Longmans, 9d. each), issued by the Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association.

IV.—TEACHER TRAINING

Most modern works on the Sunday school have something to say upon teacher training. Special works dealing with the question are:—

Brumbaugh.—“The Making of the Teacher.”
(Sunday School Times Co., 4s.)

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Trumbull. — "Teaching and Teachers." (Sunday School Times Co., 5s.)

On the principles of teaching there are many useful books which are quite within the capacity of most Sunday school teachers. The following may be noticed:—

Adams.—"A Primer on Teaching," with reference to Sunday school teaching. (T. and T. Clark, 6d.)

Du Bois.—"The Point of Contact in Teaching." (Sunday School Union, 1s. 6d.)

Fitch.—"The Art of Teaching." (Sunday School Union, 1s. ; paper, 6d.)

James.—"Talks on Psychology to Teachers." (Longmans, 4s. 6d.)

Of teacher training courses (designed to meet the conditions laid down by the International Sunday School Association: see footnote p. 146), the following may be named:—

"Training the Teacher." — A standard course by Dr. Schauffler and others. (Sunday School Times Co., 2s. ; paper, 1s. 6d.)

"Westminster Teacher Training Course," First and Second Years (each 1s., Westminster Press).

The following list of miscellaneous works bearing upon different aspects of the subject may be found useful:—

The Church and the Next Generation

Flora V. Stebbins.—“The Home Department of To-day.” (Sunday School Times Co., 1s.)

Faris.—“The Pastor and the Sunday School.” (Sunday School Times Co., 1s.)

Forbush.—“The Boy Problem.” (Pilgrim Press, 4s.)

Burton and Matthews.—“Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School.” (Chicago University Press, 4s.)

Amos R. Wells.—“Sunday School Success.” (Revell, 5s.)

A. F. Schauffler.—“Ways of Working.” (Sunday School Union, 1s. 6d.)

Louise S. Houghton.—“Telling Bible Stories.” (Bickers, 4s.)

Johnson.—“Bible Teaching by Modern Methods.” (Sunday School Union, 3s. 6d.)

Littlefield.—“Handwork in the Sunday School.” (Sunday School Times Co., 4s. 6d.)

N.B.—The prices given above are in most cases net.

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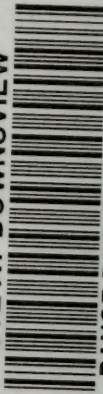
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